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THE WORKS OF

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

KENSINGTON EDITION

VOLUME VI

THE HISTORY OF

PENDENNIS

HIS FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES, HIS FRIENDS
AND HIS GREATEST ENEMY

BY

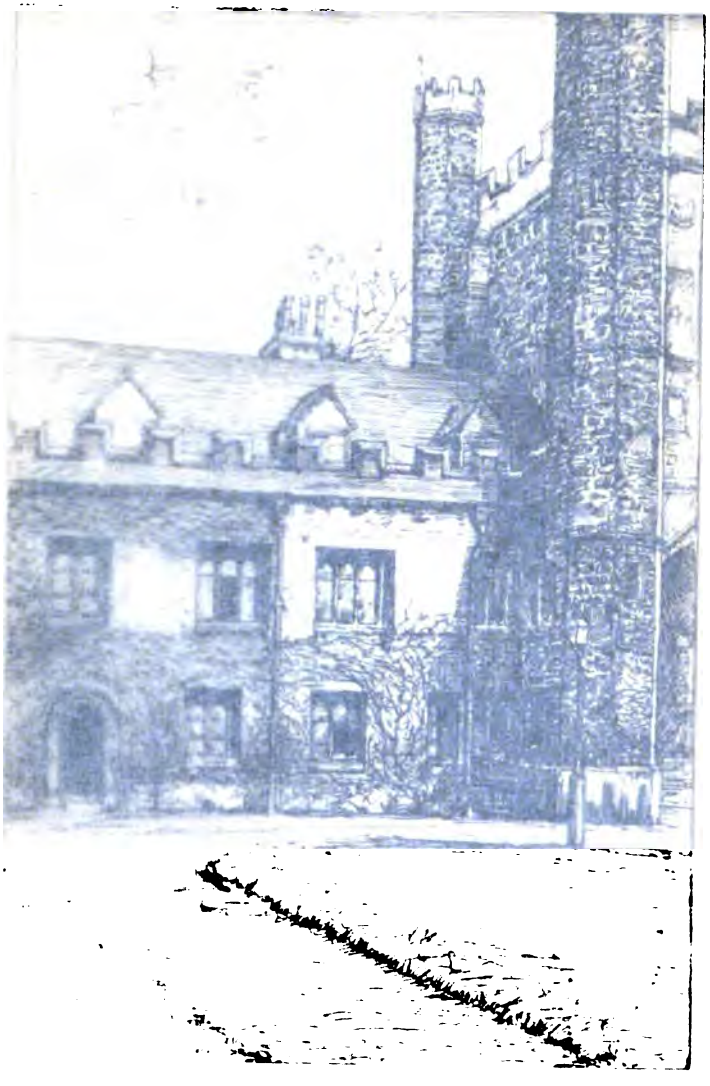
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

WITH THE AUTHOR'S ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME III

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1904

View in Trinity College, Cambridge [the two windows
at the right of the door are those of
Thackeray's rooms]



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From a recent photograph for the Kensington Edition.

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PENDENNIS

CHAPTER LII

A CRITICAL CHAPTER

AS Fanny saw the two ladies and the anxious countenance of the elder, who regarded her with a look of inscrutable alarm and terror, the poor girl at once knew that Pen's mother was before her; there was a resemblance between the widow's haggard eyes and Arthur's as he tossed in his bed in fever. Fanny looked wistfully at Mrs. Pendennis and at Laura afterwards; there was no more expression in the latter's face than if it had been a mass of stone. Hard-heartedness and gloom dwelt on the figures of both the new-comers; neither showed any the faintest gleam of mercy or sympathy for Fanny. She looked desperately from them to the Major behind them. Old Pendennis dropped his eyelids, looking up ever so stealthily from under them at Arthur's poor little nurse.

"I—I wrote to you yesterday, if you please, ma'am," Fanny said, trembling in every limb as she spoke; and as pale as Laura, whose sad menacing face looked over Mrs. Pendennis's shoulder.

"Did you, madam?" Mrs. Pendennis said. "I suppose I may now relieve you from nursing my son. I am his mother, you understand."

"Yes, ma'am. I—this is the way to his—Oh, wait a minute," cried out Fanny. "I must prepare you for his—"

The widow, whose face had been hopelessly cruel and ruthless, here started back with a gasp and a little cry, which she speedily stifled.

"He's been so since yesterday," Fanny said, trembling very much, and with chattering teeth.

A horrid shriek of laughter came out of Pen's room, whereof the door was open; and, after several shouts, the poor wretch began to sing a college drinking-song, and then to hurray and to shout as if he was in the midst of a wine party, and to thump with his fist against the wainscot. He was quite delirious.

"He does not know me, ma'am," Fanny said.

"Indeed. Perhaps he will know his mother; let me pass, if you please, and go in to him." And the widow hastily pushed by little Fanny, and through the dark passage which led into Pen's sitting-room. Laura sailed by Fanny, too, without a word; and Major Pendennis followed them. Fanny sat down on a bench in the passage, and cried, and prayed as well as she could. She would have died for him; and they hated her! They had not a word of thanks or kindness for her, the fine ladies. She sate there in the passage, she did not know how long. They never came out to speak to her. She

sate there until Doctor Goodenough came to pay his second visit that day; he found the poor little thing at the door.

"What, nurse? How's your patient?" asked the good-natured Doctor. "Has he had any rest?"

"Go and ask them. They're inside," Fanny answered.

"Who? his mother?"

Fanny nodded her head and didn't speak.

"You must go to bed yourself, my poor little maid," said the Doctor. "You will be ill, too, if you don't."

"Oh, mayn't I come and see him: mayn't I come and see him! I—I—love him so," the little girl said; and as she spoke she fell down on her knees and clasped hold of the Doctor's hand in such an agony that to see her melted the kind physician's heart, and caused a mist to come over his spectacles.

"Pooh, pooh! Nonsense! Nurse, has he taken his draught? Has he had any rest? Of course you must come and see him. So must I."

"They'll let me sit here, won't they, sir? I'll never make no noise. I only ask to stop here," Fanny said. On which the Doctor called her a stupid little thing; put her down upon the bench where Pen's printer's devil used to sit so many hours; tapped her pale cheek with his finger, and bustled into the further room.

Mrs. Pendennis was ensconced pale and solemn in a great chair by Pen's bed-side. Her watch was on the bed-table by Pen's medicines. Her bonnet and cloaks were laid in the window. She had her Bible in her lap, without which she never travelled. Her first movement, after seeing her son, had been to take Fanny's shawl and bonnet which were on his drawers, and bring them

out and drop them down upon his study-table. She had closed the door upon Major Pendennis, and Laura too; and taken possession of her son.

She had had a great doubt and terror lest Arthur should not know her; but that pang was spared to her, in part at least. Pen knew his mother quite well, and familiarly smiled and nodded at her. When she came in, he instantly fancied that they were at home at Fairoaks; and began to talk and chatter and laugh in a rambling wild way. Laura could hear him outside. His laughter shot shafts of poison into her heart. It was true then. He had been guilty—and with *that* creature!—an intrigue with a servant-maid; and she had loved him—and he was dying most likely—raving and unrepentant. The Major now and then hummed out a word of remark or consolation, which Laura scarce heard. A dismal sitting it was for all parties; and when Goodenough appeared, he came like an angel into the room.

It is not only for the sick man, it is for the sick man's friends that the Doctor comes. His presence is often as good for them as for the patient, and they long for him yet more eagerly. How we have all watched after him! what an emotion the thrill of his carriage-wheels in the street, and at length at the door, has made us feel! how we hang upon his words, and what a comfort we get from a smile or two, if he can vouchsafe that sunshine to lighten our darkness! Who hasn't seen the mother prying into his face, to know if there is hope for the sick infant that cannot speak, and that lies yonder, its little frame battling with fever? Ah, how she looks into his eyes! What thanks if there is light there; what grief and pain if he casts them down, and dares not say

"hope!" Or it is the house-father who is stricken. The terrified wife looks on, while the Physician feels his patient's wrist, smothering her agonies, as the children have been called upon to stay their plays and their talk. Over the patient in the fever, the wife expectant, the children unconscious, the Doctor stands as if he were Fate, the dispenser of life and death: he *must* let the patient off this time; the woman prays so for his respite! One can fancy how awful the responsibility must be to a conscientious man: how cruel the feeling that he has given the wrong remedy, or that it might have been possible to do better: how harassing the sympathy with survivors, if the case is unfortunate—how immense the delight of victory!

Having passed through a hasty ceremony of introduction to the new-comers, of whose arrival he had been made aware by the heart-broken little nurse in waiting without, the Doctor proceeded to examine the patient, about whose condition of high fever there could be no mistake, and on whom he thought it necessary to exercise the strongest antiphlogistic remedies in his power. He consoled the unfortunate mother as best he might; and giving her the most comfortable assurances on which he could venture, that there was no reason to despair yet, that everything might still be hoped from his youth, the strength of his constitution, and so forth; and having done his utmost to allay the horrors of the alarmed matron, he took the elder Pendennis aside into the vacant room (Warrington's bed-room), for the purpose of holding a little consultation.

The case was very critical. The fever, if not stopped, might and would carry off the young fellow: he must be bled forthwith: the mother must be informed of this

necessity. Why was that other young lady brought with her? She was out of place in a sick room.

"And there was another woman still, be hanged to it!" the Major said, "the—the little person who opened the door. His sister-in-law had brought the poor little devil's bonnet and shawl out, and flung them upon the study-table. Did Goodenough know anything about the—the little person? I just caught a glimpse of her as we passed in," the Major said, "and begad she was uncommonly nice-looking." The Doctor looked queer: the Doctor smiled—in the very gravest moments, with life and death pending, such strange contrasts and occasions of humour will arise, and such smiles will pass, to satirize the gloom, as it were, and to make it more gloomy!

"I have it," at last he said, re-entering the study; and he wrote a couple of notes hastily at the table there, and sealed one of them. Then, taking up poor Fanny's shawl and bonnet, and the notes, he went out in the passage to that poor little messenger, and said, "Quick, nurse; you must carry this to the surgeon, and bid him come instantly: and then go to my house, and ask for my servant, Harbottle, and tell him to get this prescription prepared; and wait until I—until it is ready. It may take a little time in preparation."

So poor Fanny trudged away with her two notes, and found the apothecary, who lived in the Strand hard by, and who came straightway, his lancet in his pocket, to operate on his patient; and then Fanny made for the Doctor's house, in Hanover Square.

The Doctor was at home again before the prescription was made up, which took Harbottle, his servant, such a long time in compounding; and, during the re-

mainder of Arthur's illness, poor Fanny never made her appearance in the quality of nurse at his chambers any more. But for that day and the next, a little figure

might be seen lurking about Pen's staircase,—a sad, sad little face looked at and interrogated the apothecary, and the apothecary's boy, and the laundress, and the kind physician himself, as they passed out of the chambers of the sick man. And on the third day, the kind Doctor's chariot stopped at Shepherd's Inn, and the

good, and honest, and benevolent man went into the Porter's Lodge, and tended a little patient he had there, for whom the best remedy he found was on the day when he was enabled to tell Fanny Bolton that the crisis was over, and that there was at length every hope for Arthur Pendennis.

J. Costigan, Esquire, late of her Majesty's service, saw the Doctor's carriage, and criticised its horses and appointments. "Green liveries, bedad!" the General said, "and as foin a pair of high-stepping bee horses as ever a gentleman need sit behoind, let alone a docthor. There's no ind to the proide and ar'gance of them docthors, now-a-days—not but that is a good one, and a scoientific cyarkter, and a roight good fellow, bedad; and he's brought the poor little girl well troo her faver, Bows, me boy;" and so pleased was Mr. Costigan with the Doctor's behaviour and skill, that, whenever he met Dr. Goodenough's carriage in future, he made a point of saluting it and the physician inside, in as courteous and magnificent a manner, as if Dr. Goodenough had been the Lord Liftenant himself, and Captain Costigan had been in his glory in Phaynix Park.

The widow's gratitude to the physician knew no bounds—or scarcely any bounds, at least. The kind gentleman laughed at the idea of taking a fee from a literary man, or the widow of a brother practitioner, and she determined when she got back to Fairoaks that she would send Goodenough the silver-gilt vase, the jewel of the house, and the glory of the late John Pendennis, preserved in green baize, and presented to him at Bath, by the Lady Elizabeth Firebrace, on the recovery of her son, the late Sir Anthony Firebrace, from the scarlet fever. Hippocrates, Hygeia, King Bladud, and a

wreath of serpents surmount the cup to this day; which was executed in their finest manner, by Messrs. Abednego, of Milsom Street; and the inscription was by Mr. Birch, tutor to the young baronet.

This priceless gem of art the widow determined to devote to Goodenough, the preserver of her son; and there was scarcely any other favour which her gratitude would not have conferred upon him, except one, which he desired most, and which was that she should think a little charitably and kindly of poor Fanny, of whose artless, sad story, he had got something during his interviews with her, and of whom he was induced to think very kindly,—not being disposed, indeed, to give much credit to Pen for his conduct in the affair, or not knowing what that conduct had been. He knew enough, however, to be aware that the poor infatuated little girl was without stain as yet; that while she had been in Pen's room it was to see the last of him, as she thought, and that Arthur was scarcely aware of her presence; and that she suffered under the deepest and most pitiful grief, at the idea of losing him, dead or living.

But on the one or two occasions when Goodenough alluded to Fanny, the widow's countenance, always soft and gentle, assumed an expression so cruel and inexorable, that the Doctor saw it was in vain to ask her for justice or pity, and he broke off all entreaties, and ceased making any further allusions regarding his little client. There is a complaint which neither poppy, nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the East could allay, in the men in his time, as we are informed by a popular poet of the days of Elizabeth; and which, when exhibited in women, no medical discoveries or practice subsequent—neither homœopathy, nor hydropathy, nor

mesmerism, nor Dr. Simpson, nor Dr. Locock can cure, and that is—we won't call it jealousy, but rather gently denominate it rivalry and emulation in ladies.

Some of those mischievous and prosaic people who carp and calculate at every detail of the romancer, and want to know, for instance, how, when the characters in the "Critic" are at a dead lock with their daggers at each other's throats, they are to be got out of that murderous complication of circumstances, may be induced to ask how it was possible in a set of chambers in the Temple, consisting of three rooms, two cupboards, a passage, and a coal-box, Arthur a sick gentleman, Helen his mother, Laura her adopted daughter, Martha their country attendant, Mrs. Wheezer a nurse from St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Mrs. Flanagan an Irish laundress, Major Pendennis a retired military officer, Morgan his valet, Pidgeon Mr. Arthur Pendennis's boy, and others could be accommodated—the answer is given at once, that almost everybody in the Temple was out of town, and that there was scarcely a single occupant of Pen's house in Lamb Court except those who were engaged round the sick-bed of the sick gentleman, about whose fever we have not given a lengthy account, neither shall we enlarge very much upon the more cheerful theme of his recovery.

Everybody we have said was out of town, and of course such a fashionable man as young Mr. Sibwright, who had chambers on the second floor in Pen's staircase, could not be supposed to remain in London. Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Pendennis's laundress, was acquainted with Mrs. Rouncy who did for Mr. Sibwright, and that gentleman's bed-room was got ready for Miss Bell, or Mrs. Pendennis, when the latter should be inclined to

leave her son's sick-room, to try and seek for a little rest for herself.

If that young buck and flower of Baker Street, Percy Sibwright, could have known who was the occupant of his bed-room, how proud he would have been of that apartment!—what poems he would have written about Laura! (several of his things have appeared in the annuals, and in manuscript in the nobility's albums)—he was a Camford man and very nearly got the English Prize Poem, it was said—Sibwright, however, was absent and his bed given up to Miss Bell. It was the prettiest little brass bed in the world, with chintz curtains lined with pink—he had a mignonette box in his bed-room window, and the mere sight of his little exhibition of shiny boots, arranged in trim rows over his wardrobe, was a gratification to the beholder. He had a museum of scent, pomatum, and bears'-grease pots, quite curious to examine, too; and a choice selection of portraits of females almost always in sadness and generally in disguise or deshabille, glittered round the neat walls of his elegant little bower of repose. Medora with dishevelled hair was consoling herself over her banjo for the absence of her Conrad—the Princesse Fleur de Marie (of Rudolstein and the Mystères de Paris) was sadly ogling out of the bars of her convent cage, in which, poor prisoned bird, she was moulting away—Dorothea of Don Quixote was washing her eternal feet:—in fine, it was such an elegant gallery as became a gallant lover of the sex. And in Sibwright's sitting-room, while there was quite an infantine law library clad in skins of fresh new-born calf, there was a tolerably large collection of classical books which he could not read, and of English and French works of poetry and fiction

which he read a great deal too much. His invitation cards of the past season still decorated his looking-glass: and scarce anything told of the lawyer but the wig-box beside the Venus upon the middle shelf of the bookcase, on which the name of P. Sibwright, Esquire, was gilded.

With Sibwright in chambers was Mr. Bangham. Mr. Bangham was a sporting man, married to a rich widow. Mr. Bangham had no practice—did not come to chambers thrice in a term: went a circuit for those mysterious reasons which make men go circuit,—and his room served as a great convenience to Sibwright when that young gentleman gave his little dinners. It must be confessed that these two gentlemen have nothing to do with our history, will never appear in it again probably, but we cannot help glancing through their doors as they happen to be open to us, and as we pass to Pen's rooms; as in the pursuit of our own business in life through the Strand, at the Club, nay at church itself, we cannot help peeping at the shops on the way, or at our neighbour's dinner, or at the faces under the bonnets in the next pew.

Very many years after the circumstances about which we are at present occupied, Laura, with a blush and a laugh showing much humour, owned to having read a French novel once much in vogue, and when her husband asked her, wondering where on earth she could have got such a volume, she owned that it was in the Temple, when she lived in Mr. Percy Sibwright's chambers.

"And, also, I never confessed," she said, "on that same occasion, what I must now own to: that I opened the japanned box, and took out that strange-looking wig inside it, and put it on and looked at myself in the glass in it."

Suppose Percy Sibwright had come in at such a moment as that? What would he have said,—the enraptured rogue? What would have been all the pictures of disguised beauties in his room compared to that living one? Ah, we are speaking of old times, when Sibwright was a bachelor and before he got a county court,—when people were young—when *most* people were young. Other people are young now; but we no more.

When Miss Laura played this prank with the wig, you can't suppose that Pen could have been very ill up stairs; otherwise, though she had grown to care for him ever so little, common sense of feeling and decorum would have prevented her from performing any tricks or trying any disguises.

But all sorts of events had occurred in the course of the last few days which had contributed to increase or account for her gaiety, and a little colony of the reader's old friends and acquaintances was by this time established in Lamb Court, Temple, and round Pen's sickbed there. First, Martha, Mrs. Pendennis's servant, had arrived from Fairoaks, being summoned thence by the Major, who justly thought her presence would be comfortable and useful to her mistress and her young master, for neither of whom the constant neighbourhood of Mrs. Flanagan (who during Pen's illness required more spirituous consolation than ever to support her) could be pleasant. Martha then made her appearance in due season to wait upon Mrs. Pendennis, nor did that lady go once to bed until the faithful servant had reached her, when, with a heart full of maternal thankfulness, she went and lay down upon Warrington's straw mattress, and among his mathematical books, as has been already described.

It is true that ere that day a great and delightful alteration in Pen's condition had taken place. The fever, subjugated by Dr. Goodenough's blisters, potions, and lancet, had left the young man, or only returned at intervals of feeble intermittence; his wandering senses had settled in his weakened brain: he had had time to kiss and bless his mother for coming to him, and calling for Laura and his uncle (who were both affected according to their different natures by his wan appearance, his lean shrunken hands, his hollow eyes and voice, his thin bearded face) to press their hands and thank them affectionately; and after this greeting, and after they had been turned out of the room by his affectionate nurse, he had sunk into a fine sleep which had lasted for about sixteen hours, at the end of which period he awoke calling out that he was very hungry. If it is hard to be ill and to loathe food, oh, how pleasant to be getting well and to be feeling hungry—*how* hungry! Alas, the joys of convalescence become feebler with increasing years, as other joys do—and then—and then comes that illness when one does not convalesce at all.

On the day of this happy event, too, came another arrival in Lamb Court. This was introduced into the Pen-Warrington sitting-room by large puffs of tobacco smoke—the puffs of smoke were followed by an individual with a cigar in his mouth, and a carpet-bag under his arm—this was Warrington who had run back from Norfolk, when Mr. Bows thoughtfully wrote to inform him of his friend's calamity. But he had been from home when Bows's letter had reached his brother's house —the Eastern Counties did not then boast of a railway (for we beg the reader to understand that we only commit anachronisms when we choose, and when by a daring

violation of those natural laws some great ethical truth is to be advanced)—in fine, Warrington only appeared with the rest of the good luck upon the lucky day after Pen's convalescence may have been said to have begun.

His surprise was, after all, not very great when he found the chambers of his sick friend occupied, and his old acquaintance the Major seated demurely in an easy-chair (Warrington had let himself into the rooms with his own pass-key), listening, or pretending to listen, to a young lady who was reading to him a play of Shakspeare in a low sweet voice. The lady stopped and started, and laid down her book, at the apparition of the tall traveller with the cigar and the carpet-bag. He blushed, he flung the cigar into the passage: he took off his hat, and dropped that too, and going up to the Major, seized that old gentleman's hand, and asked questions about Arthur.

The Major answered in a tremulous though cheery voice—it was curious how emotion seemed to olden him—and returning Warrington's pressure with a shaking hand, told him the news—of Arthur's happy crisis, of his mother's arrival—with her young charge—with Miss—

"You need not tell me her name," Mr. Warrington said with great animation, for he was affected and elated with the thought of his friend's recovery—"you need not tell me your name. I knew at once it was Laura." And he held out his hand and took hers. Immense kindness and tenderness gleamed from under his rough eyebrows, and shook his voice as he gazed at her and spoke to her. "And this is Laura!" his looks seemed to say. "And this is Warrington," the generous girl's heart beat back. "Arthur's hero—the brave and the

kind—he has come hundreds of miles to succour him, when he heard of his friend's misfortune!"

"Thank you, Mr. Warrington," was all that Laura said, however: and as she returned the pressure of his kind hand, she blushed so that she was glad the lamp was behind her to conceal her flushing face.

As these two were standing in this attitude, the door of Pen's bed-chamber was opened stealthily as his mother was wont to open it, and Warrington saw another lady, who first looked at him, and then turning round towards the bed, said, "Hsh!" and put up her hand.

It was to Pen Helen was turning, and giving caution. He called out with a feeble, tremulous, but cheery voice, "Come in, Stunner—come in, Warrington. I knew it was you—by the—by the smoke, old boy," he said, as holding his worn hand out, and with tears at once of weakness and pleasure in his eyes, he greeted his friend.

"I—I beg pardon, ma'am, for smoking," Warrington said, who now almost for the first time blushed for his wicked propensity.

Helen only said, "God bless you, Mr. Warrington." She was so happy, she would have liked to kiss George. Then, and after the friends had had a brief, very brief interview, the delighted and inexorable mother, giving her hand to Warrington, sent him out of the room too, back to Laura and the Major, who had not resumed their play of Cymbeline where they had left it off at the arrival of the rightful owner of Pen's chambers.

CHAPTER LIII

CONVALESCENCE

OUR duty now is to record a fact concerning Pendennis, which, however shameful and disgraceful when told regarding the chief personage and godfather of a novel, must, nevertheless, be made known to the public who reads his veritable memoirs. Having gone to bed ill with fever, and suffering to a certain degree under the passion of love, after he had gone through his physical malady, and had been bled and had been blistered, and had had his head shaved, and had been treated and medicamented as the doctor ordained:—it is a fact, that, when he rallied up from his bodily ailment, his mental malady had likewise quitted him, and he was no more in love with Fanny Bolton than you or I, who are much too wise, or too moral, to allow our hearts to go gadding after porters' daughters.

He laughed at himself as he lay on his pillow, thinking of this second cure which had been effected upon

him. He did not care the least about Fanny now: he wondered how he ever should have cared: and according to his custom made an autopsy of that dead passion, and anatomised his own defunct sensation for his poor little nurse. What could have made him so hot and eager about her but a few weeks back? Not her wit, not her breeding, not her beauty—there were hundreds of women better-looking than she. It was out of himself that the passion had gone: it did not reside in her. She was the same; but the eyes which saw her were changed; and, alas, that it should be so! were not particularly eager to see her any more. He felt very well disposed towards the little thing, and so forth, but as for violent personal regard, such as he had but a few weeks ago, it had fled under the influence of the pill and lancet, which had destroyed the fever in his frame. And an immense source of comfort and gratitude it was to Pendennis (though there was something selfish in that feeling, as in most others of our young man), that he had been enabled to resist temptation at the time when the danger was greatest, and had no particular cause of self-reproach as he remembered his conduct towards the young girl. As from a precipice down which he might have fallen, so from the fever from which he had recovered, he reviewed the Fanny Bolton snare, now that he had escaped out of it, but I'm not sure that he was not ashamed of the very satisfaction which he experienced. It is pleasant, perhaps, but it is humiliating to own that you love no more.

Meanwhile the kind smiles and tender watchfulness of the mother at his bed-side filled the young man with peace and security. To see that health was returning, was all the unwearied nurse demanded: to execute any

Helen Installed

caprice or order of her patient's, her chiefest joy and reward. He felt himself environed by her love, and thought himself almost as grateful for it as he had been when weak and helpless in childhood.

Some misty notions regarding the first part of his illness, and that Fanny had nursed him, Pen may have had, but they were so dim that he could not realise them with accuracy, or distinguish them from what he knew to be delusions which had occurred and were remembered during the delirium of his fever. So as he had not thought proper on former occasions to make any allusions about Fanny Bolton to his mother, of course he could not now confide to her his sentiments regarding Fanny, or make this worthy lady a confidante. It was on both sides an unlucky precaution and want of confidence; and a word or two in time might have spared the good lady, and those connected with her, a deal of pain and anguish.

Seeing Miss Bolton installed as nurse and tender to Pen, I am sorry to say Mrs. Pendennis had put the worst construction on the fact of the intimacy of these two unlucky young persons, and had settled in her own mind that the accusations against Arthur were true. Why not have stopped to inquire?—There are stories to a man's disadvantage that the women who are fondest of him are always the most eager to believe. Isn't a man's wife often the first to be jealous of him? Poor Pen got a good stock of this suspicious kind of love from the nurse who was now watching over him; and the kind and pure creature thought that her boy had gone through a malady much more awful and debasing than the mere physical fever, and was stained by crime as well as weakened by illness. The consciousness of this

she had to bear perforce silently, and to try to put a mask of cheerfulness and confidence over her inward doubt and despair and horror.

When Captain Shandon, at Boulogne, read the next number of the "Pall Mall Gazette," it was to remark to Mrs. Shandon that Jack Finucane's hand was no longer visible in the leading articles, and that Mr. Warrington must be at work there again. "I know the crack of his whip in a hundred, and the cut which the fellow's thong leaves. There's Jack Bludyer, goes to work like a butcher, and mangles a subject. Mr. Warrington finishes a man, and lays his cuts neat and regular, straight down the back, and drawing blood every line;" at which dreadful metaphor, Mrs. Shandon said, "Law, Charles, how can you talk so! I always thought Mr. Warrington very high, but a kind gentleman; and and I'm sure he was most kind to the children." Upon which Shandon said, "Yes; he's kind to the children; but he's savage to the men; and to be sure, my dear, you don't understand a word about what I'm saying; and it's best you shouldn't; for it's little good comes out of writing for newspapers; and it's better here, living easy at Boulogne, where the wine's plenty, and the brandy costs but two francs a bottle. Mix us another tumbler, Mary, my dear; we'll go back into harness soon. 'Cras ingens iterabimus æquor'—bad luck to it."

In a word, Warrington went to work with all his might, in place of his prostrate friend, and did Pen's portion of the "Pall Mall Gazette" "with a vengeance," as the saying is. He wrote occasional articles and literary criticisms; he attended theatres and musical performances, and discoursed about them with his usual savage energy. His hand was too strong for such small

subjects, and it pleased him to tell Arthur's mother, and uncle, and Laura, that there was no hand in all the band of penmen more graceful and light, more pleasant and more elegant, than Arthur's. "The people in this country, ma'am, don't understand what style is, or they would see the merits of our young one," he said to Mrs. Pendennis. "I call him ours, ma'am, for I bred him; and I am as proud of him as you are; and, bating a little wilfulness, and a little selfishness, and a little dandyfication, I don't know a more honest, or loyal, or gentle creature. His pen is wicked sometimes, but he is as kind as a young lady—as Miss Laura here—and I believe he would not do any living mortal harm."

At this, Helen, though she heaved a deep, deep sigh, and Laura, though she, too, was sadly wounded, nevertheless were most thankful for Warrington's good opinion of Arthur, and loved him for being so attached to their Pen. And Major Pendennis was loud in his praises of Mr. Warrington,—more loud and enthusiastic than it was the Major's wont to be. "He is a gentleman, my dear creature," he said to Helen, "every inch a gentleman, my good madam—the Suffolk Warringtons—Charles the First's baronets:—what could he be but a gentleman, come out of that family?—father,—Sir Miles Warrington; ran away with—beg your pardon, Miss Bell. Sir Miles was a very well-known man in London, and a friend of the Prince of Wales. This gentleman is a man of the greatest talents, the very highest accomplishments,—sure to get on, if he had a motive to put his energies to work."

Laura blushed for herself whilst the Major was talking and praising Arthur's hero. As she looked at Warrington's manly face, and dark, melancholy eyes, this

young person had been speculating about him, and had settled in her mind that he must have been the victim of an unhappy attachment; and as she caught herself so speculating, why, Miss Bell blushed.

Warrington got chambers hard by,—Grenier's chambers in Flag Court; and having executed Pen's task with great energy in the morning, his delight and pleasure of an afternoon was to come and sit with the sick man's company in the sunny autumn evenings; and he had the honour more than once of giving Miss Bell his arm for a walk in the Temple Gardens; to take which pastime, when the frank Laura asked of Helen permission, the Major eagerly said, "Yes, yes, begad—of course you go out with him—it's like the country, you know; everybody goes out with everybody in the Gardens, and there are beadles, you know, and that sort of thing—everybody walks in the Temple Gardens." If the great arbiter of morals did not object, why should simple Helen? She was glad that her girl should have such fresh air as the river could give, and to see her return with heightened colour and spirits from these harmless excursions.

Laura and Helen had come, you must know, to a little explanation. When the news arrived of Pen's alarming illness, Laura insisted upon accompanying the terrified mother to London, would not hear of the refusal which the still angry Helen gave her, and, when refused a second time yet more sternly, and when it seemed that the poor lost lad's life was despaired of, and when it was known that his conduct was such as to render all thoughts of union hopeless, Laura had, with many tears, told her mother a secret with which every observant person who reads this story is acquainted al-

ready. Now she never could marry him, was she to be denied the consolation of owning how fondly, how truly, how entirely she had loved him? The mingling tears of the women appeased the agony of their grief somewhat, and the sorrows and terrors of their journey were at least in so far mitigated that they shared them together.

What could Fanny expect when suddenly brought up for sentence before a couple of such judges? Nothing but swift condemnation, awful punishment, merciless dismissal! Women are cruel critics in cases such as that in which poor Fanny was implicated; and we like them to be so; for, besides the guard which a man places round his own harem, and the defences which a woman has in her heart, her faith, and honour, hasn't she all her own friends of her own sex to keep watch that she does not go astray, and to tear her to pieces if she is found erring? When our Mahmouds or Selims of Baker Street or Belgrave Square visit their Fatimas with condign punishment, their mothers sew up Fatima's sack for her, and her sisters and sisters-in-law see her well under water. And this present writer does not say nay; he protests most solemnly, he is a Turk too. He wears a turban and a beard like another, and is all for the sack practice, Bismillah! But O you spotless, who have the right of capital punishment vested in you, at least be very cautious that you make away with the proper (if so she may be called) person. Be very sure of the fact before you order the barge out: and don't pop your subject into the Bosphorus, until you are quite certain that she deserves it. This is all I would urge in poor Fatima's behalf—absolutely all —not a word more, by the beard of the Prophet. If

she's guilty, down with her—heave over the sack, away with it into the Golden Horn bubble and squeak, and justice being done, give way, men, and let us pull back to supper.

So the Major did not in any way object to Warrington's continued promenades with Miss Laura, but, like a benevolent old gentleman, encouraged in every way the intimacy of that couple. Were there any exhibitions in town? he was for Warrington conducting her to them. If Warrington had proposed to take her to Vauxhall itself, this most complaisant of men would have seen no harm,—nor would Helen, if Pendennis the elder had so ruled it,—nor would there have been any harm between two persons whose honour was entirely spotless,—between Warrington, who saw in intimacy a pure, and high-minded, and artless woman for the first time in his life,—and Laura, who too for the first time was thrown into the constant society of a gentleman of great natural parts and powers of pleasing; who possessed varied acquirements, enthusiasm, simplicity, humour, and that freshness of mind which his simple life and habits gave him, and which contrasted so much with Pen's dandy indifference of manner and faded sneer. In Warrington's very uncouthness there was a refinement, which the other's finery lacked. In his energy, his respect, his desire to please, his hearty laughter, or simple confiding pathos, what a difference to Sultan Pen's yawning sovereignty and languid acceptance of homage! What had made Pen at home such a dandy and such a despot? The women had spoiled him, as we like them and as they like to do. They had cloyed him with obedience, and surfeited him with sweet respect and submission, until he grew weary

of the slaves who waited upon him, and their caresses and cajoleries excited him no more. Abroad, he was brisk and lively, and eager and impassioned enough—most men are, so constituted and so nurtured.—Does this, like the former sentence, run a chance of being misinterpreted, and does any one dare to suppose that the writer would incite the women to revolt? Never, by the whiskers of the Prophet, again he says. He wears a beard, and he likes his women to be slaves. What man doesn't? What man would be henpecked, I say? We will cut off all the heads in Christendom or Turkeydom rather than that.

Well, then, Arthur being so languid, and indifferent, and careless about the favours bestowed upon him, how came it that Laura should have such a love and rapturous regard for him, that a mere inadequate expression of it should have kept the girl talking all the way from Fairoaks to London, as she and Helen travelled in the post-chaise? As soon as Helen had finished one story about the dear fellow, and narrated, with a hundred sobs and ejaculations, and looks up to heaven, some thrilling incidents which occurred about the period when the hero was breeched, Laura began another equally interesting and equally ornamented with tears, and told how heroically he had a tooth out or wouldn't have it out, or how daringly he robbed a bird's nest, or how magnanimously he spared it; or how he gave a shilling to the old woman on the common, or went without his bread and butter for the beggar-boy who came into the yard—and so on. One to another the sobbing women sang laments upon their hero, who, my worthy reader has long since perceived, is no more a hero than either one of us. Being as he was, why should a sensible girl be so fond of him?

This point has been argued before in a previous unfortunate sentence (which lately drew down all the wrath of Ireland upon the writer's head), and which said that the greatest rascal-cutthroats have had somebody to be fond of them, and if those monsters, why not ordinary mortals? And with whom shall a young lady fall in love but with the person she sees? She is not supposed to lose her heart in a dream, like a Princess in the "Arabian Nights;" or to plight her young affections to the portrait of a gentleman in the Exhibition, or a sketch in the "Illustrated London News." You have an instinct within you which inclines you to attach yourself to some one: you meet Somebody: you hear Somebody constantly praised: you walk, or ride, or waltz, or talk, or sit in the same pew at church with Somebody: you meet again, and again, and—"Marriages are made in Heaven," your dear mamma says, pinning your orange-flower wreath on, with her blessed eyes dimmed with tears—and there is a wedding breakfast, and you take off your white satin and retire to your coach-and-four, and you and he are a happy pair.—Or, the affair is broken off, and then, poor dear wounded heart! why then you meet Somebody Else, and twine your young affections round number two. It is your nature so to do. Do you suppose it is all for the man's sake that you love, and not a bit for your own? Do you suppose you would drink if you were not thirsty, or eat if you were not hungry?

So then Laura liked Pen because she saw scarcely anybody else at Fairoaks except Doctor Portman and Captain Glanders, and because his mother constantly praised her Arthur, and because he was gentleman-like, tolerably good-looking and witty, and because, above

all, it was of her nature to like somebody. And having once received this image into her heart, she there tenderly nursed it and clasped it—she there, in his long absences and her constant solitudes, silently brooded over it and fondled it—and when after this she came to London, and had an opportunity of becoming rather intimate with Mr. George Warrington, what on earth was to prevent her from thinking him a most odd, original, agreeable, and pleasing person?

A long time afterwards, when these days were over, and Fate in its own way had disposed of the various persons now assembled in the dingy building in Lamb Court, perhaps some of them looked back and thought how happy the time was, and how pleasant had been their evening talks and little walks and simple recreations round the sofa of Pen the convalescent. The Major had a favourable opinion of September in London from that time forward, and declared at his clubs and in society that the dead season in town was often pleasant, doosed pleasant, begad! He used to go home to his lodgings in Bury Street of a night, wondering that it was already so late, and that the evening had passed away so quickly. He made his appearance at the Temple pretty constantly in the afternoon, and tugged up the long black staircase with quite a benevolent activity and perseverance. And he made interest with the chef at Bays's (that renowned cook, the superintendence of whose work upon Gastronomy compelled the gifted author to stay in the metropolis), to prepare little jellies, delicate clear soups, aspics, and other trifles good for invalids, which Morgan the valet constantly brought down to the little Lamb Court colony. And the permission to drink a glass or two of pure sherry being ac-

corded to Pen by Doctor Goodenough, the Major told with almost tears in his eyes how his noble friend the Marquis of Steyne, passing through London on his way to the Continent, had ordered any quantity of his precious, his priceless Amontillado, that had been a present from King Ferdinand to the noble Marquis, to be placed at the disposal of Mr. Arthur Pendennis. The widow and Laura tasted it with respect (though they didn't in the least like the bitter flavour), but the invalid was greatly invigorated by it, and Warrington pronounced it superlatively good, and proposed the Major's health in a mock speech after dinner on the first day when the wine was served, and that of Lord Steyne and the aristocracy in general.

Major Pendennis returned thanks with the utmost gravity, and in a speech in which he used the words "the present occasion," at least the proper number of times. Pen cheered with his feeble voice from his arm-chair. Warrington taught Miss Laura to cry "Hear! hear!" and tapped the table with his knuckles. Pidgeon the attendant grinned, and honest Doctor Goodenough found the party so merrily engaged, when he came in to pay his faithful gratuitous visit.

Warrington knew Sibwright, who lived below, and that gallant gentleman, in reply to a letter informing him of the use to which his apartments had been put, wrote back the most polite and flowery letter of acquiescence. He placed his chambers at the service of their fair occupants, his bed at their disposal, his carpets at their feet. Everybody was kindly disposed towards the sick man and his family. His heart (and his mother's too, as we may fancy) melted within him at the thought of so much good feeling and good nature. Let Pen's

biographer be pardoned for alluding to a time not far distant when a somewhat similar mishap brought him a providential friend, a kind physician, and a thousand proofs of a most touching and surprising kindness and sympathy.

There was a piano in Mr. Sibwright's chamber (indeed this gentleman, a lover of all the arts, performed himself—and exceedingly ill too—upon the instrument; and had had a song dedicated to him—the words by himself, the air by his devoted friend Leopoldo Twankidillo —and at this music-box, as Mr. Warrington called it, Laura, at first with a great deal of tremor and blushing (which became her very much), played and sang, sometimes of an evening, simple airs, and old songs of home. Her voice was a rich contralto, and Warrington, who scarcely knew one tune from another, and who had but one tune or bray in his *répertoire,*—a most discordant imitation of God save the King,—sat rapt in delight listening to these songs. He could follow their rhythm if not their harmony; and he could watch, with a constant and daily growing enthusiasm, the pure and tender and generous creature who made the music.

I wonder how that poor pale little girl in the black bonnet, who used to stand at the lamp-post in Lamb Court sometimes of an evening, looking up to the open windows from which the music came, liked to hear it? When Pen's bed-time came the songs were hushed. Lights appeared in the upper room: *his* room, whither the widow used to conduct him; and then the Major and Mr. Warrington, and sometimes Miss Laura, would have a game at *écarté* or backgammon; or she would sit by working a pair of slippers in worsted—a pair of gentlemen's slippers—they might have been for Arthur or

for George or for Major Pendennis: one of those three would have given anything for the slippers.

Whilst such business as this was going on within, a rather shabby old gentleman would come and lead away the pale girl in the black bonnet, who had no right to be abroad in the night air, and the Temple porters, the few laundresses, and other amateurs who had been listening to the concert, would also disappear.

Just before ten o'clock there was another musical performance, namely that of the chimes of St. Clement's clock in the Strand, which played the clear cheerful notes of a psalm, before it proceeded to ring its ten fatal strokes. As they were ringing, Laura began to fold up the slippers; Martha from Fairoaks appeared with a bed-candle, and a constant smile on her face; the Major said, "God bless my soul, is it so late?" Warrington and he left their unfinished game, and got up and shook hands with Miss Bell. Martha from Fairoaks lighted them out of the passage and down the stair, and, as they descended, they could hear her bolting and locking "the sporting door" after them, upon her young mistress and herself. If there had been any danger, grinning Martha said she would have got down "that thar hooky soord which hung up in gantleman's room,"—meaning the Damascus scimetar with the name of the Prophet engraved on the blade and the red-velvet scabbard, which Percy Sibwright, Esquire, brought back from his tour in the Levant, along with an Albanian dress, and which he wore with such elegant effect at Lady Mullinger's fancy ball, Gloucester Square, Hyde Park. It entangled itself in Miss Kewsey's train, who appeared in the dress in which she, with her mamma, had been presented to their sovereign (the latter

by the L—d Ch-nc-ll-r's lady), and led to events which have nothing to do with this history. Is not Miss Kewsey now Mrs. Sibwright? Has Sibwright not got a county court?—Good night, Laura and Fairoaks Martha. Sleep well and wake happy, pure and gentle lady.

Sometimes after these evenings Warrington would walk a little way with Major Pendennis—just a little way—just as far as the Temple gate—as the Strand—as Charing Cross—as the Club—he was not going into the Club? Well, as far as Bury Street, where he would laughingly shake hands on the Major's own door-step. They had been talking about Laura all the way. It was wonderful how enthusiastic the Major, who, as we know, used to dislike her, had grown to be regarding the young lady.—"Dev'lish fine girl, begad. Dev'lish well-mannered girl—my sister-in-law has the manners of a duchess and would bring up any girl well. Miss Bell's a *little* countryfied. But the smell of the hawthorn is pleasant, demmy. How she blushes. Your London girls would give many a guinea for a bouquet like that—natural flowers, begad! And she's a little money too—nothing to speak of—but a pooty little bit of money." In all which opinions no doubt Mr. Warrington agreed; and though he laughed as he shook hands with the Major, his face fell as he left his veteran companion; and he strode back to chambers, and smoked pipe after pipe long into the night, and wrote article upon article, more and more savage, in lieu of friend Pen disabled.

Well, it was a happy time for almost all parties concerned. Pen mended daily. Sleeping and eating were his constant occupations. His appetite was something

frightful. He was ashamed of exhibiting it before Laura, and almost before his mother who laughed and applauded him. As the roast chicken of his dinner went away he eyed the departing friend with sad longing, and began to long for jelly, or tea, or what not. He was like an ogre in devouring. The Doctor cried stop, but Pen would not. Nature called out to him more loudly than the Doctor, and that kind and friendly physician handed him over with a very good grace to the other healer.

And here let us speak very tenderly and in the strictest confidence of an event which befel him, and to which he never liked an allusion. During his delirium the ruthless Goodenough ordered ice to be put to his head, and all his lovely hair to be cut. It was done in the time of—of the other nurse, who left every single hair of course in a paper for the widow to count and treasure up. She never believed but that the girl had taken away some of it, but then women are so suspicious upon these matters.

When this direful loss was made visible to Major Pendennis, as, of course, it was the first time the elder saw the poor young man's shorn pate, and when Pen was quite out of danger, and gaining daily vigour, the Major, with something like blushes and a queer wink of his eyes, said he knew of a—a person—a coiffeur, in fact—a good man, whom he would send down to the Temple, and who would—a—apply—a—a temporary remedy to that misfortune.

Laura looked at Warrington with the archest sparkle in her eyes—Warrington fairly burst out into a boohoo of laughter: even the widow was obliged to laugh; and the Major erubescent confounded the impudence of the

young folks, and said when he had his hair cut he would keep a lock of it for Miss Laura.

Warrington voted that Pen should wear a barrister's wig. There was Sibwright's down below, which would become him hugely. Pen said "Stuff," and seemed as confused as his uncle; and the end was that a gentleman

from Burlington Arcade waited next day upon Mr. Pendennis, and had a private interview with him in his bed-room; and a week afterwards the same individual appeared with a box under his arm, and an ineffable grin of politeness on his face, and announced that he had brought 'ome Mr. Pendennis's 'ead of 'air.

It must have been a grand but melancholy sight to see Pen in the recesses of his apartment, sadly contemplating his ravaged beauty and the artificial means of hiding its ruin. He appeared at length in the 'ead of 'air; but Warrington laughed so that Pen grew sulky,

and went back for his velvet cap, a neat turban, which the fondest of mammas had worked for him. Then Mr. Warrington and Miss Bell got some flowers off the ladies' bonnets and made a wreath, with which they decorated the wig and brought it out in procession, and did homage before it. In fact they indulged in a hundred sports, jocularities, waggeries and *petits jeux innocens:* so that the second and third floors of Number 6, Lamb Court, Temple, rang with more cheerfulness and laughter than had been known in those precincts for many a long day.

At last, after about ten days of this life, one evening when the little spy of the court came out to take her usual post of observation at the lamp, there was no music from the second-floor window, there were no lights in the third-story chambers, the windows of each were open, and the occupants were gone. Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, told Fanny what had happened. The ladies and all the party had gone to Richmond for change of air. The antique travelling chariot was brought out again and cushioned with many pillows for Pen and his mother; and Miss Laura went in the most affable manner in the omnibus under the guardianship of Mr. George Warrington. He came back and took possession of his old bed that night in the vacant and cheerless chambers, and to his old books and his old pipes, but not perhaps to his old sleep.

The widow had left a jar full of flowers upon his table, prettily arranged, and when he entered they filled the solitary room with odour. They were memorials of the kind, gentle souls who had gone away, and who had decorated for a little while that lonely, cheerless

place. He had had the happiest days of his whole life, George felt—he knew it now they were just gone: he went and took up the flowers and put his face to them, smelt them—perhaps kissed them. As he put them down, he rubbed his rough hand across his eyes with a bitter word and laugh. He would have given his whole life and soul to win that prize which Arthur rejected. Did she want fame? He would have won it for her:—devotion?—a great heart full of pent-up tenderness and manly love and gentleness was there for her, if she might take it. But it might not be. Fate had ruled otherwise. "Even if I could, she would not have me," George thought. "What has an ugly, rough old fellow like me, to make any woman like him? I'm getting old, and I've made no mark in life. I've neither good looks, nor youth, nor money, nor reputation. A man must be able to do something besides stare at her and offer on his knees his uncouth devotion, to make a woman like him. What can I do? Lots of young fellows have passed me in the race—what they call the prizes of life didn't seem to me worth the trouble of the struggle. But for *her*. If she had been mine and liked a diamond—ah! shouldn't she have worn it! Psha, what a fool I am to brag of what I would have done! We are the slaves of destiny. Our lots are shaped for us, and mine is ordained long ago. Come, let us have a pipe, and put the smell of these flowers out of court. Poor little silent flowers! You'll be dead to-morrow. What business had you to show your red cheeks in this dingy place?"

By his bed-side George found a new Bible which the widow had placed there, with a note inside saying that

she had not seen the book amongst his collection in a room where she had spent a number of hours, and where God had vouchsafed to her prayers the life of her son, and that she gave to Arthur's friend the best thing she could, and besought him to read in the volume sometimes, and to keep it as a token of a grateful mother's regard and affection. Poor George mournfully kissed the book as he had done the flowers; and the morning found him still reading in its awful pages, in which so many stricken hearts, in which so many tender and faithful souls have found comfort under calamity, and refuge and hope in affliction.

CHAPTER LIV

FANNY'S OCCUPATION'S GONE

GOOD Helen, ever since her son's illness, had taken, as we have seen, entire possession of the young man, of his drawers and closets and all which they contained: whether shirts that wanted buttons, or stockings that required mending, or, must it be owned? letters that lay amongst those articles of raiment, and which of course it was necessary that somebody should answer during Arthur's weakened and incapable condition. Perhaps Mrs. Pendennis was laudably desirous to have some explanations about the dreadful Fanny Bolton mystery, regarding which she had never breathed a word to her son, though it was present in her mind always, and occasioned her inexpressible anxiety and disquiet. She had caused the brass knocker to be screwed off the inner door of the chambers, whereupon the postman's startling double rap would, as she justly argued, disturb the rest of her patient, and she did not allow him to see any letter which arrived, whether from boot-makers who importuned him, or hatters who

had a heavy account to make up against next Saturday, and would be very much obliged if Mr. Arthur Pendennis would have the kindness to settle, &c. Of these documents, Pen, who was always freehanded and careless, of course had his share, and though no great one, one quite enough to alarm his scrupulous and conscientious mother. She had some savings; Pen's magnificent self-denial, and her own economy, amounting from her great simplicity and avoidance of show to parsimony almost, had enabled her to put by a little sum of money, a part of which she delightedly consecrated to the paying off the young gentleman's obligations. At this price, many a worthy youth and respected reader would hand over his correspondence to his parents; and perhaps there is no greater test of a man's regularity and easiness of conscience, than his readiness to face the postman. Blessed is he who is made happy by the sound of a rat-tat! The good are eager for it: but the naughty tremble at the sound thereof. So it was very kind of Mrs. Pendennis doubly to spare Pen the trouble of hearing or answering letters during his illness.

There could have been nothing in the young man's chests of drawers and wardrobes which could be considered as inculpating him in any way, nor any satisfactory documents regarding the Fanny Bolton affair found there, for the widow had to ask her brother-in-law if he knew anything about the odious transaction, and the dreadful intrigue in which her son was engaged. When they were at Richmond one day, and Pen with Warrington had taken a seat on a bench on the terrace, the widow kept Major Pendennis in consultation, and laid her terrors and perplexities before him, such of them at least (for, as is the wont of men and women, she did not make

quite a clean confession, and I suppose no spendthrift asked for a schedule of his debts, no lady of fashion asked by her husband for her dress-maker's bills ever sent in the whole of them yet)—such, we say, of her perplexities, at least, as she chose to confide to her Director for the time being.

When, then, she asked the Major what course she ought to pursue, about this dreadful—this horrid affair, and whether he knew anything regarding it? the old gentleman puckered up his face, so that you could not tell whether he was smiling or not; gave the widow one queer look with his little eyes; cast them down to the carpet again, and said "My dear, good creature, I don't know anything about it; and I don't wish to know anything about it; and, as you ask me my opinion, I think you had best know nothing about it too. Young men will be young men; and, begad, my good ma'am, if you think our boy is a Jo—"

"Pray, spare me this," Helen broke in, looking very stately.

"My dear creature, I did not commence the conversation, permit me to say," the Major said, bowing very blandly.

"I can't bear to hear such a sin—such a dreadful sin—spoken of in such a way," the widow said, with tears of annoyance starting from her eyes. "I can't bear to think that my boy should commit such a crime. I wish he had died, almost, before he had done it. I don't know how I survive it myself; for it is breaking my heart, Major Pendennis, to think that his father's son—my child—whom I remember so good—oh, so good, and full of honour!—should be fallen so dreadfully low, as to—as to—"

"As to flirt with a little grisette, my dear creature?" said the Major. "Egad, if all the mothers in England were to break their hearts because—Nay, nay; upon my word and honour, now, don't agitate yourself, don't cry. I can't bear to see a woman's tears—I never could—never. But how do we know that anything serious has happened? Has Arthur said anything?"

"His silence confirms it," sobbed Mrs. Pendennis, behind her pocket-handkerchief.

"Not at all. There are subjects, my dear, about which a young fellow cannot surely talk to his mamma," insinuated the brother-in-law.

"She has written to him," cried the lady, behind the cambric.

"What, before he was ill? Nothing more likely."

"No, since," the mourner with the batiste mask gasped out; "not before; that is, I don't think so—that is, I—"

"Only since; and you have—yes, I understand. I suppose when he was too ill to read his own correspondence, you took charge of it, did you?"

"I am the most unhappy mother in the world," cried out the unfortunate Helen.

"The most unhappy mother in the world, because your son is a man and not a hermit! Have a care, my dear sister. If you have suppressed any letters to him, you may have done yourself a great injury; and, if I know anything of Arthur's spirit, may cause a difference between him and you, which you'll rue all your life—a difference that's a dev'lish deal more important, my good madam, than the little—little—trumpery cause which originated it."

"There was only one letter," broke out Helen,—"only

a very little one—only a few words. Here it is—oh—how can you, how can you speak so?"

When the good soul said only "a very little one," the Major could not speak at all so inclined was he to laugh, in spite of the agonies of the poor soul before him, and for whom he had a hearty pity and liking too. But each was looking at the matter with his or her peculiar eyes and view of morals, and the Major's morals, as the reader knows, were not those of an ascetic.

"I recommend you," he gravely continued, "if you can, to seal it up—those letters ain't unfrequently sealed with wafers—and to put it amongst Pen's other letters, and let him have them when he calls for them. Or if we can't seal it, we mistook it for a bill."

"I can't tell my son a lie," said the widow. It had been put silently into the letter-box two days previous to their departure from the Temple, and had been brought to Mrs. Pendennis by Martha. She had never seen Fanny's handwriting, of course; but when the letter was put into her hands, she knew the author at once. She had been on the watch for that letter every day since Pen had been ill. She had opened some of his other letters because she wanted to get at that one. She had the horrid paper poisoning her bag at that moment. She took it out and offered it to her brother-in-law.

"*Arthur Pendennis, Esq.,*" he read, in a timid little sprawling handwriting, and with a sneer on his face. "No, my dear, I won't read any more. But you, who have read it, may tell me what the letter contains—only prayers for his health in bad spelling, you say—and a desire to see him? Well—there's no harm in that. And as you ask me"—here the Major began to look a little queer for his own part, and put on his demure look—

" as you ask me, my dear, for information, why, I don't mind telling you that—ah—that—Morgan, my man, has made some inquiries regarding this affair, and that—my friend Doctor Goodenough also looked into it—and it appears that this person was greatly smitten with Arthur; that he paid for her and took her to Vauxhall Gardens, as Morgan heard from an old acquaintance of Pen's and ours, an Irish gentleman, who was very nearly once having the honour of being the—from an Irishman, in fact;—that the girl's father, a violent man of intoxicated habits, has beaten her mother, who persists in declaring her daughter's entire innocence to her husband on the one hand, while on the other she told Goodenough that Arthur had acted like a brute to her child. And so you see the story remains in a mystery. Will you have it cleared up? I have but to ask Pen, and he will tell me at once—he is as honourable a man as ever lived."

" Honourable! " said the widow, with bitter scorn. " Oh, brother, what is this you call honour? If my boy has been guilty, he must marry her. I would go down on my knees and pray him to do so."

" Good God! are you mad? " screamed out the Major; and remembering former passages in Arthur's history and Helen's, the truth came across his mind that, were Helen to make this prayer to her son, he *would* marry the girl: he was wild enough and obstinate enough to commit any folly when a woman he loved was in the case. " My dear sister, have you lost your senses? " he continued (after an agitated pause, during which the above dreary reflection crossed him); and in a softened tone, " What right have we to suppose that anything has passed between this girl and him? Let's see the letter. Her heart is breaking; pray, pray write to me—home un-

happy—unkind father—your nurse—poor little Fanny —spelt, as you say, in a manner to outrage all sense of decorum. But, good heavens! my dear, what is there in this? only that the little devil is making love to him still. Why she didn't come into his chambers until he was so delirious that he didn't know her. Whatd'youcall'em, Flanagan, the laundress, told Morgan, my man, so. She came in company of an old fellow, an old Mr. Bows, who came most kindly down to Stillbrook and brought me away—by the way, I left him in the cab, and never paid the fare; and dev'lish kind it was of him. No, there's nothing in the story."

"Do you think so? Thank Heaven—thank God!" Helen cried. "I'll take the letter to Arthur and ask him now. Look at him there. He's on the terrace with Mr. Warrington. They are talking to some children. My boy was always fond of children. He's innocent, thank God—thank God! Let me go to him."

Old Pendennis had his own opinion. When he briskly took the not guilty side of the case, but a moment before, very likely the old gentleman had a different view from that which he chose to advocate, and judged of Arthur by what he himself would have done. If she goes to Arthur, and he speaks the truth, as the rascal will, it spoils all, he thought. And he tried one more effort.

"My dear, good soul," he said, taking Helen's hand and kissing it, "as your son has not acquainted you with this affair, think if you have any right to examine it. As you believe him to be a man of honour, what right have you to doubt his honour in this instance? Who is his accuser? An anonymous scoundrel who has brought no specific charge against him. If there were any such, wouldn't the girl's parents have come forward? He is

not called upon to rebut, nor you to entertain an anonymous accusation; and as for believing him guilty because a girl of that rank happened to be in his rooms acting as nurse to him, begad, you might as well insist upon his marrying that dem'd old Irish gin-drinking laundress, Mrs. Flanagan."

The widow burst out laughing through her tears—the victory was gained by the old general.

"Marry Mrs. Flanagan, by Ged," he continued, tapping her slender hand. "No. The boy has told you nothing about it, and you know nothing about it. The boy is innocent—of course. And what, my good soul, is the course for us to pursoo? Suppose he is attached to this girl—don't look sad again, it's merely a supposition—and, begad, a young fellow may have an attachment, mayn't he?—Directly he gets well he will be at her again."

"He must come home! We must go off directly to Fairoaks," the widow cried out.

"My good creature, he'll bore himself to death at Fairoaks. He'll have nothing to do but to think about his passion there. There's no place in the world for making a little passion into a big one, and where a fellow feeds on his own thoughts, like a lonely country-house where there's nothing to do. We must occupy him: amuse him: we must take him abroad: he's never been abroad except to Paris for a lark. We must travel a little. He must have a nurse with him, to take great care of him, for Goodenough says he had a dev'lish narrow squeak of it (don't look frightened), and so you must come and watch: and I suppose you'll take Miss Bell, and I should like to ask Warrington to come. Arthur's dev'lish fond of Warrington. He can't do with-

out Warrington. Warrington's family is one of the oldest in England, and he is one of the best young fellows I ever met in my life. I like him exceedingly."

"Does Mr. Warrington know anything about this—this affair?" asked Helen. "He had been away, I know, for two months before it happened; Pen wrote me so."

"Not a word—I—I've asked him about it. I've pumped him. He never heard of the transaction, never; I pledge you my word," cried out the Major, in some alarm. "And, my dear, I think you had much best not talk to him about it—much best not—of course not: the subject is most delicate and painful."

The simple widow took her brother's hand and pressed it. "Thank you, brother," she said. "You have been very, very kind to me. You have given me a great deal of comfort. I'll go to my room, and think of what you have said. This illness and these—these emotions—have agitated me a great deal; and I'm not very strong, you know. But I'll go and thank God that my boy is innocent. He *is* innocent. Isn't he, sir?"

"Yes, my dearest creature, yes," said the old fellow, kissing her affectionately, and quite overcome by her tenderness. He looked after her as she retreated, with a fondness which was rendered more piquant, as it were, by the mixture of a certain scorn which accompanied it. "Innocent!" he said; "I'd swear, till I was black in the face, he was innocent, rather than give that good soul pain."

Having achieved this victory, the fatigued and happy warrior laid himself down on the sofa, and put his yellow silk pocket-handkerchief over his face, and indulged in a snug little nap, of which the dreams, no doubt, were

very pleasant, as he snored with refreshing regularity. The young men sate, meanwhile, dawdling away the sunshiny hours on the terrace, very happy, and Pen, at least, very talkative. He was narrating to Warrington a plan for a new novel, and a new tragedy. Warrington laughed at the idea of his writing a tragedy. By Jove, he would show that he could; and he began to spout some of the lines of his play.

The little solo on the wind instrument which the Major was performing was interrupted by the entrance of Miss Bell. She had been on a visit to her old friend, Lady Rockminster, who had taken a summer villa in the neighbourhood; and who, hearing of Arthur's illness, and his mother's arrival at Richmond, had visited the latter; and, for the benefit of the former, whom she didn't like, had been prodigal of grapes, partridges, and other attentions. For Laura the old lady had a great fondness, and longed that she should come and stay with her; but Laura could not leave her mother at this juncture. Worn out by constant watching over Arthur's health, Helen's own had suffered very considerably; and Doctor Goodenough had had reason to prescribe for her as well as for his younger patient.

Old Pendennis started up on the entrance of the young lady. His slumbers were easily broken. He made her a gallant speech—he had been full of gallantry towards her of late. Where had she been gathering those roses which she wore on her cheeks? How happy he was to be disturbed out of his dreams by such a charming reality! Laura had plenty of humour and honesty; and these two caused her to have on her side something very like a contempt for the old gentleman. It delighted her to draw out his worldliness, and to make the old habitué

of clubs and drawing-rooms tell his twaddling tales about great folks, and expound his views of morals.

Not in this instance, however, was she disposed to be satirical. She had been to drive with Lady Rockminster in the Park, she said; and she had brought home game for Pen, and flowers for mamma. She looked very grave about mamma. She had just been with Mrs. Pendennis. Helen was very much worn, and she feared she was very, very ill. Her large eyes filled with tender marks of the sympathy which she felt in her beloved friend's condition. She was alarmed about her. Could not that good—that dear Dr. Goodenough—cure her?

"Arthur's illness, and *other* mental anxiety," the Major slowly said, "had, no doubt, shaken Helen." A burning blush upon the girl's face showed that she understood the old man's allusions. But she looked him full in the face and made no reply. "He might have spared me that," she thought. "What is he aiming at in recalling that shame to me?"

That he had an aim in view is very possible. The old diplomatist seldom spoke without some such end. Doctor Goodenough had talked to him, he said, about their dear friend's health, and she wanted rest and change of scene—yes, change of scene. Painful circumstances which had occurred must be forgotten and never alluded to; he begged pardon for even hinting at them to Miss Bell—he never should do so again—nor, he was sure, would she. Everything must be done to soothe and comfort their friend, and his proposal was that they should go abroad for the autumn to a watering-place in the Rhine neighbourhood, where Helen might rally her exhausted spirits, and Arthur try and become a new man. Of course, Laura would not forsake her mother?

Of course not. It was about Helen, and Helen only—that is, about Arthur too for her sake, that Laura was anxious. She would go abroad or anywhere with Helen.

And Helen having thought the matter over for an hour in her room, had by that time grown to be as anxious for the tour as any school-boy, who has been reading a book of voyages, is eager to go to sea. Whither should they go? the farther the better—to some place so remote that even recollection could not follow them thither: so delightful that Pen should never want to leave it—anywhere so that he could be happy. She opened her desk with trembling fingers and took out her banker's book, and counted up her little savings. If more was wanted, she had the diamond cross. She would borrow from Laura again. "Let us go—let us go," she thought; "directly he can bear the journey let us go away. Come, kind Doctor Goodenough—come quick, and give us leave to quit England."

The good Doctor drove over to dine with them that very day. "If you agitate yourself so," he said to her, "and if your heart beats so, and if you persist in being so anxious about a young gentleman who is getting well as fast as he can, we shall have you laid up, and Miss Laura to watch you; and then it will be her turn to be ill, and I should like to know how the deuce a doctor is to live who is obliged to come and attend you all for nothing? Mrs. Goodenough is already jealous of you, and says, with perfect justice, that I fall in love with my patients. And you must please to get out of the country as soon as ever you can, that I may have a little peace in my family."

When the plan of going abroad was proposed to Arthur, it was received by that gentleman with the greatest

alacrity and enthusiasm. He longed to be off at once. He let his moustachios grow from that very moment, in order, I suppose, that he might get his mouth into training for a perfect French and German pronunciation; and he was seriously disquieted in his mind because the moustachios, when they came, were of a decidedly red colour. He had looked forward to an autumn at Fairoaks; and perhaps the idea of passing two or three months there did not amuse the young man. "There is not a soul to speak to in the place," he said to Warrington. "I can't stand old Portman's sermons, and pompous after-dinner conversation. I know all old Glanders's stories about the Peninsular war. The Claverings are the only Christian people in the neighbourhood, and they are not to be at home before Christmas, my uncle says: besides, Warrington, I want to get out of the country. Whilst you were away, confound it, I had a temptation, from which I am very thankful to have escaped, and which I count that even my illness came very luckily to put an end to." And here he narrated to his friend the circumstances of the Vauxhall affair, with which the reader is already acquainted.

Warrington looked very grave when he heard this story. Putting the moral delinquency out of the question, he was extremely glad for Arthur's sake that the latter had escaped from a danger which might have made his whole life wretched; "which certainly," said Warrington, "would have occasioned the wretchedness and ruin of the other party. And your mother and—and your friends—what a pain it would have been to them!" urged Pen's companion, little knowing what grief and annoyance these good people had already suffered.

"Not a word to my mother!" Pen cried out, in a state of great alarm. "She would never get over it. An *esclandre* of that sort would kill her, I do believe. And," he added, with a knowing air, and as if, like a young rascal of a Lovelace, he had been engaged in what are called *affaires de cœur* all his life, "the best way, when a danger of that sort menaces, is not to face it, but to turn one's back on it and run."

"And were you very much smitten?" Warrington asked.

"H'm!" said Lovelace. "She dropped her h's, but she was a dear little girl."

O Clarissas of this life, O you poor little ignorant vain foolish maidens! if you did but know the way in which the Lovelaces speak of you: if you could but hear Jack talking to Tom across the coffee-room of a Club; or see Ned taking your poor little letters out of his cigar-case, and handing them over to Charley, and Billy, and Harry across the mess-room table, you would not be so eager to write, or so ready to listen! There's a sort of crime which is not complete unless the lucky rogue boasts of it afterwards; and the man who betrays your honour in the first place, is pretty sure, remember that, to betray your secret too.

"It's hard to fight, and it's easy to fall," Warrington said gloomily. "And as you say, Pendennis, when a danger like this is imminent, the best way is to turn your back on it and run."

After this little discourse upon a subject about which Pen would have talked a great deal more eloquently a month back, the conversation reverted to the plans for going abroad, and Arthur eagerly pressed his friend to be of the party. Warrington was a part of the family—

a part of the cure. Arthur said he should not have half the pleasure without Warrington.

But George said No, he couldn't go. He must stop at home and take Pen's place. The other remarked that that was needless, for Shandon was now come back to London, and Arthur was entitled to a holiday.

"Don't press me," Warrington said, "I can't go. I've particular engagements. I'm best at home. I've not got the money to travel, that's the long and short of it—for travelling costs money, you know."

This little obstacle seemed fatal to Pen. He mentioned it to his mother: Mrs. Pendennis was very sorry; Mr. Warrington had been exceedingly kind; but she supposed he knew best about his affairs. And then, no doubt, she reproached herself for selfishness in wishing to carry the boy off and have him to herself altogether.

"What is this I hear from Pen, my dear Mr. Warrington?" the Major asked one day, when the pair were alone and after Warrington's objection had been stated to him. "Not go with us? We can't hear of such a thing—Pen won't get well without you. I promise you, I'm not going to be his nurse. He must have somebody with him that's stronger and gayer and better able to amuse him than a rheumatic old fogy like me. I shall go to Carlsbad very likely, when I've seen you people settle down. Travelling costs nothing now-a-days—or so little! And—and pray, Warrington, I remember that I was your father's very old friend, and if you and your brother are not on such terms as to enable you to—to anticipate your younger brother's allowance, I beg you to make me your banker, for hasn't Pen been getting into your debt these three weeks past, during which you

have been doing what he informs me is his work, with such exemplary talent and genius, begad?"

Still, in spite of this kind offer and unheard-of generosity on the part of the Major, George Warrington refused, and said he would stay at home. But it was with a faltering voice and an irresolute accent which showed how much he would like to go, though his tongue persisted in saying nay.

But the Major's persevering benevolence was not to be baulked in this way. At the tea-table that evening, Helen happening to be absent from the room for the moment, looking for Pen who had gone to roost, old Pendennis returned to the charge, and rated Warrington for refusing to join in their excursion. "Isn't it ungallant, Miss Bell?" he said, turning to that young lady. "Isn't it unfriendly? Here we have been the happiest party in the world, and this odious selfish creature breaks it up!"

Miss Bell's long eye-lashes looked down towards her tea-cup: and Warrington blushed hugely but did not speak. Neither did Miss Bell speak: but when he blushed she blushed too.

"*You* ask him to come, my dear," said the benevolent old gentleman, "and then perhaps he will listen to you—"

"Why should Mr. Warrington listen to me?" asked the young lady, putting the query to her tea-spoon seemingly and not to the Major.

"Ask him; you have not asked him," said Pen's artless uncle.

"I should be very glad, indeed, if Mr. Warrington would come," remarked Laura to the tea-spoon.

"Would you?" said George.

She looked up and said, "Yes." Their eyes met. "I

will go anywhere you ask me, or do anything," said George, lowly, and forcing out the words as if they gave him pain.

Old Pendennis was delighted; the affectionate old creature clapped his hands and cried "Bravo! bravo! It's a bargain—a bargain, begad! Shake hands on it, young people!" And Laura, with a look full of tender brightness, put out her hand to Warrington. He took hers; his face indicated a strange agitation. He seemed to be about to speak, when, from Pen's neighbouring room Helen entered, looking at them as the candle which she held lighted her pale frightened face.

Laura blushed more red than ever and withdrew her hand.

"What is it?" Helen asked.

"It's a bargain we have been making, my dear creature," said the Major in his most caressing voice. "We have just bound over Mr. Warrington in a promise to come abroad with us."

"Indeed!" Helen said.

CHAPTER LV

IN WHICH FANNY ENGAGES A NEW MEDICAL MAN

COULD Helen have suspected that, with Pen's returning strength, his unhappy partiality for little Fanny would also reawaken? Though she never spoke a word regarding that young person, after her conversation with the Major, and though, to all appearance, she utterly ignored Fanny's existence, yet Mrs. Pendennis kept a particularly close watch upon all Master Arthur's actions; on the plea of ill-health, would scarcely let him out of her sight; and was especially anxious that he should be spared the trouble of all correspondence for the present at least. Very likely Arthur looked at his own letters with some tremor; very likely, as he received them at the family table, feeling his mother's watch upon him (though the good soul's eye seemed fixed upon her tea-cup or her book), he expected daily to see a little handwriting, which he would have known, though he had never seen it yet, and his heart beat as he received the letters to his address. Was he more pleased or annoyed, that, day after day, his expectations were not realised;

and was his mind relieved, that there came no letter from Fanny? Though, no doubt, in these matters, when Lovelace is tired of Clarissa (or the contrary), it is best for both parties to break at once, and each, after the failure of the attempt at union, to go his own way, and pursue his course through life solitary; yet our self-love, or our pity, or our sense of decency, does not like that sudden bankruptcy. Before we announce to the world that our firm of Lovelace and Co. can't meet its engagements, we try to make compromises; we have mournful meetings of partners: we delay the putting up of the shutters, and the dreary announcement of the failure. It must come: but we pawn our jewels to keep things going a little longer. On the whole, I dare say, Pen was rather annoyed that he had no remonstrances from Fanny. What! could she part from him, and never so much as once look round? could she sink, and never once hold a little hand out, or cry, "Help, Arthur!" Well, well: they don't all go down who venture on that voyage. Some few drown when the vessel founders; but most are only ducked, and scramble to shore. And the reader's experience of A. Pendennis, Esquire, of the Upper Temple, will enable him to state whether that gentleman belonged to the class of persons who were likely to sink or to swim.

Though Pen was as yet too weak to walk half a mile; and might not, on account of his precious health, be trusted to take a drive in a carriage by himself, and without a nurse in attendance; yet Helen could not keep watch over Mr. Warrington too, and had no authority to prevent that gentleman from going to London if business called him thither. Indeed, if he had gone and stayed, perhaps the widow, from reasons of her own,

would have been glad; but she checked these selfish wishes as soon as she ascertained or owned them; and, remembering Warrington's great regard and services, and constant friendship for her boy, received him as a member of her family almost, with her usual melancholy kindness and submissive acquiescence. Yet somehow, one morning when his affairs called him to town, she divined what Warrington's errand was, and that he was gone to London to get news about Fanny for Pen.

Indeed, Arthur had had some talk with his friend, and told him more at large what his adventures had been with Fanny (adventures which the reader knows already), and what were his feelings respecting her. He was very thankful that he had escaped the great danger, to which Warrington said Amen heartily; that he had no great fault wherewith to reproach himself in regard of his behaviour to her, but that if they parted, as they must, he would be glad to say a God bless her, and to hope that she would remember him kindly. In his discourse with Warrington he spoke upon these matters with so much gravity, and so much emotion, that George, who had pronounced himself most strongly for the separation too, began to fear that his friend was not so well cured as he boasted of being; and that, if the two were to come together again, all the danger and the temptation might have to be fought once more. And with what result? "It is hard to struggle, Arthur, and it is easy to fall," Warrington said: "and the best courage for us poor wretches is to fly from danger. I would not have been what I am now, had I practised what I preach."

"And what did you practise, George?" Pen asked eagerly. "I knew there was something. Tell us about it, Warrington."

" There was something that can't be mended, and that shattered my whole fortunes early," Warrington answered. " I said I would tell you about it some day, Pen; and will, but not now. Take the moral without the fable now, Pen, my boy: and if you want to see a man whose whole life has been wrecked, by an unlucky rock against which he struck as a boy—here he is, Arthur, and so I warn you."

We have shown how Mr. Huxter, in writing home to his Clavering friends, mentioned that there was a fashionable club in London of which he was an attendant, and that he was there in the habit of meeting an Irish officer of distinction, who amongst other news, had given that intelligence regarding Pendennis which the young surgeon had transmitted to Clavering. This club was no other than the Back Kitchen, where the disciple of Saint Bartholomew was accustomed to meet the General, the peculiarities of whose brogue, appearance, disposition, and general conversation, greatly diverted many young gentlemen who used the Back Kitchen as a place of nightly entertainment and refreshment. Huxter, who had a fine natural genius for mimicking everything, whether it was a favourite tragic or comic actor, a cock on a dunghill, a corkscrew going into a bottle and a cork issuing thence, or an Irish officer of genteel connections who offered himself as an object of imitation with only too much readiness, talked his talk, and twanged his poor old long-bow whenever drink, a hearer, and an opportunity occurred, studied our friend the General with peculiar gusto, and drew the honest fellow out many a night. A bait, consisting of sixpennyworth of brandy-and-water, the worthy old man was sure to swallow: and under

the influence of this liquor, who was more happy than he to tell his stories of his daughter's triumphs and his own, in love, war, drink, and polite society? Thus Huxter was enabled to present to his friends many pictures of Costigan: of Costigan fighting a jewel in the Phaynix—of Costigan and his interview with the Juke of York—of Costigan at his sonunlaw's teeble, surrounded by the nobilitee of his countree—of Costigan, when crying drunk, at which time he was in the habit of confidentially lamenting his daughter's ingratichewd, and stating that his grey hairs were hastening to a praymachure greeve. And thus our friend was the means of bringing a number of young fellows to the Back Kitchen, who consumed the landlord's liquors whilst they relished the General's peculiarities, so that mine host pardoned many of the latter's foibles, in consideration of the good which they brought to his house. Not the highest position in life was this certainly, or one which, if we had a reverence for an old man, we would be anxious that he should occupy: but of this aged buffoon it may be mentioned that he had no particular idea that his condition of life was not a high one, and that in his whiskied blood there was not a black drop, nor in his muddled brains a bitter feeling, against any mortal being. Even his child, his cruel Emily, he would have taken to his heart and forgiven with tears; and what more can one say of the Christian charity of a man than that he is actually ready to forgive those who have done him every kindness, and with whom he is wrong in a dispute?

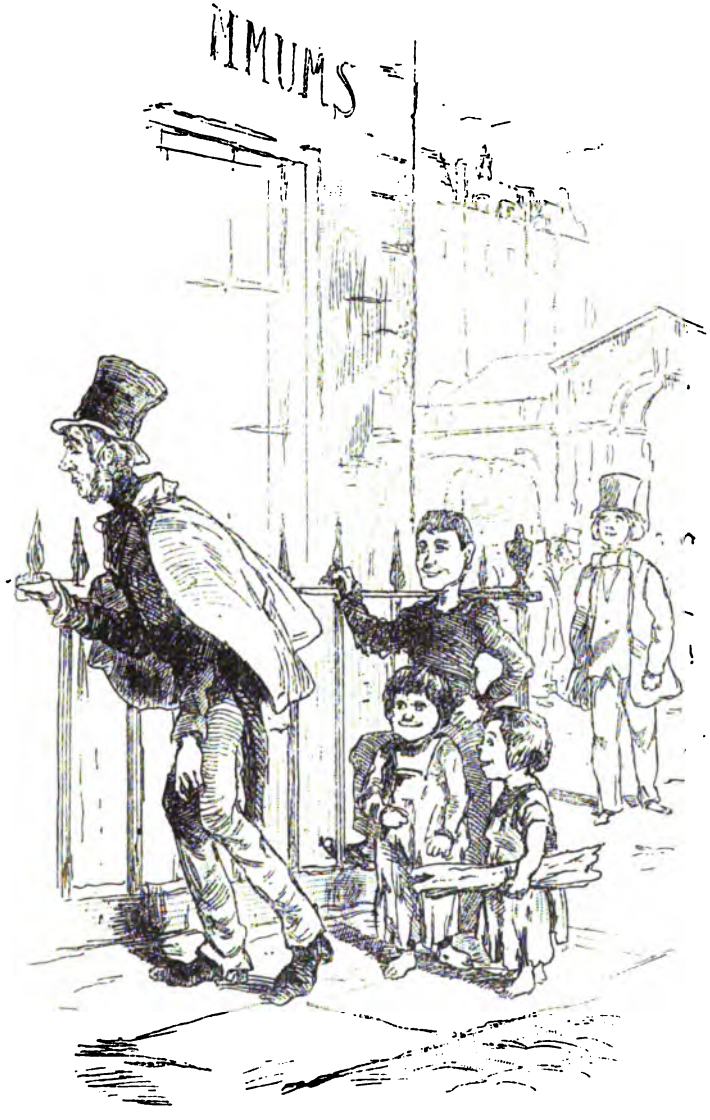
There was some idea amongst the young men who frequented the Back Kitchen, and made themselves merry with the society of Captain Costigan, that the Captain made a mystery regarding his lodgings for fear of duns,

or from a desire of privacy, and lived in some wonderful place. Nor would the landlord of the premises, when questioned upon this subject, answer any inquiries; his maxim being that he only knew gentlemen who frequented that room, *in* that room; that when they quitted that room, having paid their scores as gentlemen, and behaved as gentlemen, his communication with them ceased; and that, as a gentleman himself, he thought it was only impertinent curiosity to ask where any other gentleman lived. Costigan, in his most intoxicated and confidential moments, also evaded any replies to questions or hints addressed to him on this subject: there was no particular secret about it, as we have seen, who have had more than once the honour of entering his apartments, but in the vicissitudes of a long life he had been pretty often in the habit of residing in houses where privacy was necessary to his comfort, and where the appearance of some visitors would have brought him anything but pleasure. Hence all sorts of legends were formed by wags or credulous persons respecting his place of abode. It was stated that he slept habitually in a watch-box in the City; in a cab at a mews, where a cab proprietor gave him a shelter: in the Duke of York's Column, &c., the wildest of these theories being put abroad by the facetious and imaginative Huxter. For Huxey, when not silenced by the company of "swells," and when in the society of his own friends, was a very different fellow to the youth whom we have seen cowed by Pen's impertinent airs, and, adored by his family at home, was the life and soul of the circle whom he met, either round the festive board or the dissecting-table.

On one brilliant September morning, as Huxter was regaling himself with a cup of coffee at a stall in Covent

Garden, having spent a delicious night dancing at Vauxhall, he spied the General reeling down Henrietta-street, with a crowd of hooting blackguard boys at his heels, who had left their beds under the arches of the river betimes, and were prowling about already for breakfast, and the strange livelihood of the day. The poor old General was not in that condition when the sneers and jokes of these young beggars had much effect upon him: the cabmen and watermen at the cab-stand knew him, and passed their comments upon him: the policemen gazed after him, and warned the boys off him, with looks of scorn and pity: what did the scorn and pity of men, the jokes of ribald children, matter to the General? He reeled along the street with glazed eyes, having just sense enough to know whither he was bound, and to pursue his accustomed beat homewards. He went to bed not knowing how he had reached it, as often as any man in London. He woke and found himself there, and asked no questions; and he was tacking about on this daily though perilous voyage, when, from his station at the coffee-stall, Huxter spied him. To note his friend, to pay his twopence (indeed, he had but eightpence left, or he would have had a cab from Vauxhall to take him home), was with the eager Huxter the work of an instant—Costigan dived down the alleys by Drury-lane Theatre, where gin-shops, oyster-shops, and theatrical wardrobes abound, the proprietors of which were now asleep behind their shutters, as the pink morning lighted up their chimneys; and through these courts Huxter followed the General, until he reached Oldcastle-street, in which is the gate of Shepherd's Inn.

Here, just as he was within sight of home, a luckless slice of orange peel came between the General's heel and



The Captain won't go
home till morning

the pavement, and caused the poor old fellow to fall backwards.

Huxter ran up to him instantly, and after a pause, during which the veteran, giddy with his fall and his previous whisky, gathered, as he best might, his dizzy

brains together, the young surgeon lifted up the limping General, and very kindly and good-naturedly offered to conduct him to his home. For some time, and in reply to the queries which the student of medicine put to him, the muzzy General refused to say where his lodgings were, and declared that they were hard by, and that he could reach them without difficulty; and he disengaged himself from Huxter's arm, and made a rush, as if to get to his own home unattended: but he reeled and lurched so, that the young surgeon insisted upon accom-

panying him, and, with many soothing expressions and cheering and consolatory phrases, succeeded in getting the General's dirty old hand under what he called his own fin, and led the old fellow, moaning piteously, across the street. He stopped when he came to the ancient gate, ornamented with the armorial bearings of the venerable Shepherd. "Here 'tis," said he, drawing up at the portal, and he made a successful pull at the gate-bell, which presently brought out old Mr. Bolton, the porter, scowling fiercely, and grumbling as he was used to do every morning when it became his turn to let in that early bird.

Costigan tried to hold Bolton for a moment in genteel conversation, but the other surlily would not. "Don't bother me," he said; "go to your hown bed, Capting, and don't keep honest men out of theirs." So the Captain tacked across the square and reached his own staircase, up which he stumbled with the worthy Huxter at his heels. Costigan had a key of his own, which Huxter inserted into the keyhole for him, so that there was no need to call up little Mr. Bows from the sleep into which the old musician had not long since fallen, and Huxter having aided to disrobe his tipsy patient, and ascertained that no bones were broken, helped him to bed, and applied compresses and water to one of his knees and shins, which, with the pair of trowsers which encased them, Costigan had severely torn in his fall. At the General's age, and with his habit of body, such wounds as he had inflicted on himself are slow to heal: a good deal of inflammation ensued, and the old fellow lay ill for some days suffering both pain and fever.

Mr. Huxter undertook the case of his interesting patient with great confidence and alacrity, and con-

ducted it with becoming skill. He visited his friend day after day, and consoled him with lively rattle and conversation, for the absence of the society which Costigan needed, and of which he was an ornament; and he gave special instructions to the invalid's nurse about the quantity of whisky which the patient was to take—instructions which, as the poor old fellow could not for many days get out of his bed or sofa himself, he could not by any means infringe. Bows, Mrs. Bolton, and our little friend Fanny, when able to do so, officiated at the General's bedside, and the old warrior was made as comfortable as possible under his calamity.

Thus Huxter, whose affable manners and social turn made him quickly intimate with persons in whose society he fell, became pretty soon intimate in Shepherd's Inn, both with our acquaintances in the garrets and those in the Porter's Lodge. He thought he had seen Fanny somewhere: he felt certain that he had; but it is no wonder that he should not accurately remember her, for the poor little thing never chose to tell him where she had met him: he himself had seen her at a period, when his own views both of persons and of right and wrong were clouded by the excitement of drinking and dancing, and also little Fanny was very much changed and worn by the fever and agitation, and passion and despair, which the past three weeks had poured upon the head of that little victim. Borne down was the head now, and very pale and wan the face; and many and many a time the sad eyes had looked into the postman's, as he came to the Inn, and the sickened heart had sunk as he passed away. When Mr. Costigan's accident occurred, Fanny was rather glad to have an opportunity of being useful and doing something kind—something that would make

her forget her own little sorrows perhaps: she felt she bore them better whilst she did her duty, though I dare say many a tear dropped into the old Irishman's gruel. Ah, me! stir the gruel well, and have courage, little Fanny! If everybody who has suffered from your complaint were to die of it straightway, what a fine year the undertakers would have!

Whether from compassion for his only patient, or delight in his society, Mr. Huxter found now occasion to visit Costigan two or three times in the day at least, and if any of the members of the Porter's Lodge family were not in attendance on the General, the young doctor was sure to have some particular directions to address to them at their own place of habitation. He was a kind fellow; he made or purchased toys for the children; he brought them apples and brandy balls; he brought a mask and frightened them with it, and caused a smile upon the face of pale Fanny. He called Mrs. Bolton Mrs. B., and was very intimate, familiar, and facetious with that lady, quite different from that " 'aughty 'artless beast," as Mrs. Bolton now denominated a certain young gentleman of our acquaintance, and whom she now vowed she never could abear.

It was from this lady, who was very free in her conversation, that Huxter presently learnt what was the illness which was evidently preying upon little Fan, and what had been Pen's behaviour regarding her. Mrs. Bolton's account of the transaction was not, it may be imagined, entirely an impartial narrative. One would have thought from her story that the young gentleman had employed a course of the most persevering and flagitious artifices to win the girl's heart, had broken the most solemn promises made to her, and was a wretch to

be hated and chastised by every champion of woman. Huxter, in his present frame of mind respecting Arthur, and suffering under the latter's contumely, was ready, of course, to take all for granted that was said in the disfavour of this unfortunate convalescent. But why did he not write home to Clavering, as he had done previously, giving an account of Pen's misconduct, and of the particulars regarding it, which had now come to his knowledge? He once, in a letter to his brother-in-law, announced that that *nice young man,* Mr. Pendennis, had escaped narrowly from a fever, and that no doubt all Clavering, *where he was so popular,* would be pleased at his recovery; and he mentioned that he had an interesting case of compound fracture, an officer of distinction; which kept him in town; but as for Fanny Bolton, he made no more mention of her in his letters—no more than Pen himself had made mention of her. O you mothers at home, how much do you think you know about your lads? How much do you think you know?

But with Bows, there was no reason why Huxter should not speak his mind, and so, a very short time after his conversation with Mrs. Bolton, Mr. Sam talked to the musician about his early acquaintance with Pendennis; described him as a confounded conceited blackguard, and expressed a determination to punch his impudent head as soon as ever he should be well enough to stand up like a man.

Then it was that Bows on his part spoke, and told *his* version of the story, whereof Arthur and little Fan were the hero and heroine; how they had met by no contrivance of the former, but by a blunder of the old Irishman, now in bed with a broken shin—how Pen had acted with manliness and self-control in the business—how

Mrs. Bolton was an idiot; and he related the conversation which he, Bows, had had with Pen, and the sentiments uttered by the young man. Perhaps Bows's story caused some twinges of conscience in the breast of Pen's accuser, and that gentleman frankly owned that he had been wrong with regard to Arthur, and withdrew his project for punching Mr. Pendennis's head.

But the cessation of his hostility for Pen did not diminish Huxter's attentions to Fanny, which unlucky Mr. Bows marked with his usual jealousy and bitterness of spirit. "I have but to like anybody," the old fellow thought, "and somebody is sure to be preferred to me. It has been the same ill luck with me since I was a lad, until now that I am sixty years old. What can I expect better than to be laughed at? It is for the young to succeed, and to be happy, and not for old fools like me. I've played a second fiddle all through life," he said, with a bitter laugh; "how can I suppose the luck is to change after it has gone against me so long?" This was the selfish way in which Bows looked at the state of affairs: though few persons would have thought there was any cause for his jealousy, who looked at the pale and grief-stricken countenance of the hapless little girl, its object. Fanny received Huxter's good-natured efforts at consolation and kind attentions kindly. She laughed now and again at his jokes and games with her little sisters, but relapsed quickly into a dejection which ought to have satisfied Mr. Bows that the newcomer had no place in her heart as yet, had jealous Mr. Bows been enabled to see with clear eyes.

But Bows did not. Fanny attributed Pen's silence somehow to Bows's interference. Fanny hated him. Fanny treated Bows with constant cruelty and injustice.

She turned from him when he spoke—she loathed his attempts at consolation. A hard life had Mr. Bows and a cruel return for his regard.

When Warrington came to Shepherd's Inn as Pen's ambassador, it was for Mr. Bows's apartments he inquired (no doubt upon a previous agreement with the principal for whom he acted in this delicate negotiation), and he did not so much as catch a glimpse of Miss Fanny when he stopped at the inn-gate and made his inquiry. Warrington was, of course, directed to the musician's chambers, and found him tending the patient there, from whose chamber he came out to wait upon his guest. We have said that they had been previously known to one another, and the pair shook hands with sufficient cordiality. After a little preliminary talk, Warrington said that he had come from his friend Arthur Pendennis, and from his family, to thank Bows for his attention at the commencement of Pen's illness, and for his kindness in hastening into the country to fetch the Major.

Bows replied that it was but his duty: he had never thought to have seen the young gentleman alive again when he went in search of Pen's relatives, and he was very glad of Mr. Pendennis's recovery, and that he had his friends with him. "Lucky are they who have friends, Mr. Warrington," said the musician. "I might be up in this garret and nobody would care for me, or mind whether I was alive or dead."

"What! not the General, Mr. Bows?" Warrington asked.

"The General likes his whisky-bottle more than anything in life," the other answered; "we live together from habit and convenience; and he cares for me no

more than you do. What is it you want to ask me, Mr. Warrington? You ain't come to visit *me,* I know very well. Nobody comes to visit me. It is about Fanny, the porter's daughter, you are come—I see that very well. Is Mr. Pendennis, now he has got well, anxious to see her again? Does his lordship the Sultan propose to throw his 'ankerchief to her? She has been very ill, sir, ever since the day when Mrs. Pendennis turned her out of doors—kind of a lady, wasn't it? The poor girl and myself found the young gentleman raving in a fever, knowing nobody, with nobody to tend him but his drunken laundress—she watched day and night by him. I set off to fetch his uncle. Mamma comes and turns Fanny to the right about. Uncle comes and leaves me to pay the cab. Carry my compliments to the ladies and gentleman, and say we are both very thankful, very. Why, a countess couldn't have behaved better; and for an apothecary's lady, as I'm given to understand Mrs. Pendennis was—I'm sure her behaviour is most uncommon aristocratic and genteel. She ought to have a double gilt pestle and mortar to her coach."

It was from Mr. Huxter that Bows had learned Pen's parentage, no doubt, and if he took Pen's part against the young surgeon, and Fanny's against Mr. Pendennis, it was because the old gentleman was in so savage a mood, that his humour was to contradict everybody.

Warrington was curious, and not ill pleased at the musician's taunts and irascibility. "I never heard of these transactions," he said, "or got but a very imperfect account of them from Major Pendennis. What was a lady to do? I think (I have never spoken with her on the subject) she had some notion that the young

woman and my friend Pen were on—on terms of—of an intimacy which Mrs. Pendennis could not, of course, recognise—"

"Oh, of course not, sir. Speak out, sir; say what you mean at once, that the young gentleman of the Temple had made a victim of the girl of Shepherd's Inn, eh? And so she was to be turned out of doors—or brayed alive in the double gilt pestle and mortar, by Jove! No, Mr. Warrington, there was no such thing: there was no victimising, or if there was, Mr. Arthur was the victim, not the girl. He is an honest fellow, he is, though he is conceited, and a puppy sometimes. He can feel like a man, and run away from temptation like a man. I own it, though I suffer by it, I own it. He has a heart, he has: but the girl hasn't, sir. That girl will do anything to win a man, and fling him away without a pang, sir. If she's flung away herself, sir, she'll feel it and cry. She had a fever when Mrs. Pendennis turned her out of doors; and she made love to the Doctor, Doctor Good-enough, who came to cure her. Now she has taken on with another chap—another sawbones, ha, ha! d— it, sir, she likes the pestle and mortar, and hangs round the pill boxes, she's so fond of 'em, and she has got a fellow from Saint Bartholomew's, who grins through a horse-collar for her sisters, and charms away her melancholy. Go and see, sir: very likely he's in the lodge now. If you want news about Miss Fanny, you must ask at the Doctor's shop, sir, not of an old fiddler like me—Good-by, sir. There's my patient calling."

And a voice was heard from the Captain's bed-room, a well-known voice, which said, "I'd loike a dthrop of dthrink, Bows, I'm thirstee." And not sorry, perhaps, to hear that such was the state of things, and that Pen's

forsaken was consoling herself, Warrington took his leave of the irascible musician.

As luck would have it, he passed the lodge door just as Mr. Huxter was in the act of frightening the children with the mask whereof we have spoken, and Fanny was smiling languidly at his farces. Warrington laughed bitterly. "Are all women like that?" he thought. "I think there's one that's not," he added, with a sigh.

At Piccadilly, waiting for the Richmond omnibus, George fell in with Major Pendennis, bound in the same direction, and he told the old gentleman of what he had seen and heard respecting Fanny.

Major Pendennis was highly delighted: and as might be expected of such a philosopher, made precisely the same observation as that which had escaped from Warrington. "All women are the same," he said. "*La petite se console.* Daymy, when I used to read 'Télémaque' at school, *Calypso ne pouvait se consoler,*—you know the rest, Warrington,—I used to say it was absard. Absard, by Gad, and so it is. And so she's got a new *soupirant,* has she, the little porteress? Dayvlish nice little girl. How mad Pen will be—eh, Warrington? But we must break it to him gently, or he'll be in such a rage that he will be going after her again. We must *ménager* the young fellow."

"I think Mrs. Pendennis ought to know that Pen acted very well in the business. She evidently thinks him guilty, and according to Mr. Bows, Arthur behaved like a good fellow," Warrington said.

"My dear Warrington," said the Major, with a look of some alarm. "In Mrs. Pendennis's agitated state of health and that sort of thing, the best way, I think, is not to say a single word about the subject—or, stay,

Fanny's new physician

leave it to me: and I'll talk to her—break it to her gently, you know, and that sort of thing. I give you my word I will. And so Calypso's consoled, is she?" And he sniggered over this gratifying truth, happy in the corner of the omnibus during the rest of the journey.

Pen was very anxious to hear from his envoy what had been the result of the latter's mission; and as soon as the two young men could be alone, the ambassador spoke in reply to Arthur's eager queries.

"You remember your poem, Pen, of 'Ariadne in Naxos,'" Warrington said; "devilish bad poetry it was, to be sure."

"Après?" asked Pen, in a great state of excitement.

"When Theseus left Ariadne, do you remember what happened to her, young fellow?"

"It's a lie, it's a lie! You don't mean that!" cried out Pen, starting up, his face turning red.

"Sit down, stoopid," Warrington said, and with two fingers pushed Pen back into his seat again. "It's better for you as it is, young one," he said sadly, in reply to the savage flush in Arthur's face.

CHAPTER LVI

FOREIGN GROUND

MAJOR PENDENNIS fulfilled his promise to Warrington so far as to satisfy his own conscience, and in so far to ease poor Helen with regard to her son, as to make her understand that all connexion between Arthur and the odious little gate-keeper was at an end, and that she need have no farther anxiety with respect to an imprudent attachment or a degrading marriage on Pen's part. And that young fellow's mind was also relieved (after he had recovered the shock to his vanity) by thinking that Miss Fanny was not going to die of love for him, and that no unpleasant consequences were to be apprehended from the luckless and brief connexion.

So the whole party were free to carry into effect their projected Continental trip, and Arthur Pendennis, rentier, voyageant avec Madame Pendennis and Mademoiselle Bell, and George Warrington, particulier, âgé de 32 ans, taille 6 pieds (Anglais), figure ordinaire, cheveux noirs, barbe idem, &c., procured passports from the con-

sul of H.M. the King of the Belgians at Dover, and passed over from that port to Ostend, whence the party took their way leisurely, visiting Bruges and Ghent on their way to Brussels and the Rhine. It is not our purpose to describe this oft-travelled tour, or Laura's delight at the tranquil and ancient cities which she saw for the first time, or Helen's wonder and interest at the Béguine convents which they visited, or the almost terror with which she saw the black-veiled nuns with outstretched arms kneeling before the illuminated altars, and beheld the strange pomps and ceremonials of the Catholic worship. Bare-footed friars in the streets, crowned images of Saints and Virgins in the churches before which people were bowing down and worshipping, in direct defiance, as she held, of the written law; priests in gorgeous robes, or lurking in dark confessionals, theatres opened, and people dancing on Sundays;—all these new sights and manners shocked and bewildered the simple country lady; and when the young men after their evening drive or walk returned to the widow and her adopted daughter, they found their books of devotion on the table, and at their entrance Laura would commonly cease reading some of the psalms or the sacred pages which, of all others, Helen loved. The late events connected with her son had cruelly shaken her; Laura watched with intense, though hidden anxiety, every movement of her dearest friend; and poor Pen was most constant and affectionate in waiting upon his mother, whose wounded bosom yearned with love towards him, though there was a secret between them, and an anguish or rage almost on the mother's part, to think that she was dispossessed somehow of her son's heart, or that there were recesses in it which she

must not or dared not enter. She sickened as she thought of the sacred days of boyhood when it had not been so—when her Arthur's heart had no secrets, and she was his all in all: when he poured his hopes and pleasures, his childish griefs, vanities, triumphs into her willing and tender embrace; when her home was his nest still; and before fate, selfishness, nature, had driven him forth on wayward wings—to range on his own flight—to sing his own song—and to seek his own home and his own mate. Watching this devouring care and racking disappointment in her friend, Laura once said to Helen, "If Pen had loved me as you wished, I should have gained him, but I should have lost you, mamma, I know I should; and I like you to love me best. Men do not know what it is to love as we do, I think,"—and Helen, sighing, agreed to this portion of the young lady's speech, though she protested against the former part. For my part, I suppose Miss Laura was right in both statements, and with regard to the latter assertion especially, that it is an old and received truism—love is an hour with us: it is all night and all day with a woman. Damon has taxes, sermon, parade, tailors' bills, parliamentary duties, and the deuce knows what to think of; Delia has to think about Damon—Damon is the oak (or the post), and stands up, and Delia is the ivy or the honeysuckle whose arms twine about him. Is it not so, Delia? Is it not your nature to creep about his feet and kiss them, to twine round his trunk and hang there; and Damon's to stand like a British man with his hands in his breeches pocket, while the pretty fond parasite clings round him?

Old Pendennis had only accompanied our friends to the water's edge, and left them on board the boat, giving

the chief charge of the little expedition to Warrington. He himself was bound on a brief visit to the house of a great man, a friend of his, after which sojourn he proposed to join his sister-in-law at the German watering-place, whither the party was bound. The Major himself thought that his long attentions to his sick family had earned for him a little relaxation—and though the best of the partridges were thinned off, the pheasants were still to be shot at Stillbrook, where the noble owner then was; old Pendennis betook himself to that hospitable mansion and disported there with great comfort to himself. A royal Duke, some foreigners of note, some illustrious statesmen, and some pleasant people visited it; it did the old fellow's heart good to see his name in the "Morning Post" amongst the list of the distinguished company which the Marquis of Steyne was entertaining at his country-house at Stillbrook. He was a very useful and pleasant personage in a country-house. He entertained the young men with queer little anecdotes and *grivoises* stories on their shooting parties or in their smoking-room, where they laughed at him and with him. He was obsequious with the ladies of a morning, in the rooms dedicated to them. He walked the new arrivals about the park and gardens, and showed them the *carte du pays,* and where there was the best view of the mansion, and where the most favourable point to look at the lake: he showed where the timber was to be felled, and where the old road went before the new bridge was built, and the hill cut down; and where the place in the wood was where old Lord Lynx discovered Sir Phelim O'Neal on his knees before her ladyship, &c. &c.; he called the lodge keepers and gardeners by their names: he knew the number of domestics that sat down in the housekeeper's room, and how many dined in the

servants' hall; he had a word for everybody, and about everybody, and a little against everybody. He was invaluable in a country-house, in a word: and richly merited and enjoyed his vacation after his labours. And perhaps whilst he was thus deservedly enjoying himself with his country friends, the Major was not ill pleased at transferring to Warrington the command of the family expedition to the Continent, and thus perforce keeping him in the service of the ladies,—a servitude which George was only too willing to undergo, for his friend's sake, and for that of a society which he found daily more delightful. Warrington was a good German scholar, and was willing to give Miss Laura lessons in the language, who was very glad to improve herself; though Pen, for his part, was too weak or lazy now to resume his German studies. Warrington acted as courier and interpreter; Warrington saw the baggage in and out of ships, inns, and carriages, managed the money matters, and put the little troop into marching order. Warrington found out where the English church was, and, if Mrs. Pendennis and Miss Laura were inclined to go thither, walked with great decorum along with them. Warrington walked by Mrs. Pendennis's donkey, when that lady went out on her evening excursions; or took carriages for her; or got "Galignani" for her; or devised comfortable seats under the lime-trees for her, when the guests paraded after dinner, and the Kursaal band at the bath, where our tired friends stopped, performed their pleasant music under the trees. Many a fine whiskered Prussian or French dandy, come to the bath for the "*Trente-et-quarante*," cast glances of longing towards the pretty fresh-coloured English girl who accompanied the pale widow, and would have longed to

take a turn with her at the galop or the waltz. But Laura did not appear in the ball-room, except once or twice, when Pen vouchsafed to walk with her; and as for Warrington, that rough diamond had not had the polish of a dancing-master, and he did not know how to waltz, —though he would have liked to learn, if he could have had such a partner as Laura—Such a partner! psha, what had a stiff bachelor to do with partners and waltzing? what was he about, dancing attendance here? drinking in sweet pleasure at a risk he knows not of what after sadness, and regret, and lonely longing? But yet he stayed on. You would have said he was the widow's son, to watch his constant care and watchfulness of her; or that he was an adventurer, and wanted to marry her fortune, or, at any rate, that he wanted some very great treasure or benefit from her,—and very likely he did,— for ours, as the reader has possibly already discovered, is a Selfish Story, and almost every person, according to his nature, more or less generous than George, and according to the way of the world as it seems to us, is occupied about Number One. So Warrington selfishly devoted himself to Helen, who selfishly devoted herself to Pen, who selfishly devoted himself to himself at this present period, having no other personage or object to occupy him, except, indeed, his mother's health, which gave him a serious and real disquiet; but though they sate together, they did not talk much, and the cloud was always between them.

Every day Laura looked for Warrington, and received him with more frank and eager welcome. He found himself talking to her as he didn't know himself that he could talk. He found himself performing acts of gallantry which astounded him after the perform-

ance: he found himself looking blankly in the glass at the crows' feet round his eyes, and at some streaks of white in his hair, and some intrusive silver bristles in his grim, blue beard. He found himself looking at the

young bucks at the bath—at the blond, tight-waisted Germans—at the capering Frenchmen, with their lacquered moustachios and trim varnished boots—at the English dandies, Pen amongst them, with their calm domineering air, and insolent languor: and envied each

one of these some excellence or quality of youth, or good looks, which he possessed, and of which Warrington felt the need. And every night, as the night came, he quitted the little circle with greater reluctance; and, retiring to his own lodging in their neighbourhood, felt himself the more lonely and unhappy. The widow could not help seeing his attachment. She understood, now, why Major Pendennis (always a tacit enemy of her darling project) had been so eager that Warrington should be of their party. Laura frankly owned her great, her enthusiastic, regard for him: and Arthur would make no movement. Arthur did not choose to see what was going on; or did not care to prevent, or actually encouraged, it. She remembered his often having said that he could not understand how a man proposed to a woman twice. She was in torture—at secret feud with her son, of all objects in the world the dearest to her—in doubt, which she dared not express to herself, about Laura—averse to Warrington, the good and generous. No wonder that the healing waters of Rosenbad did not do her good, or that Doctor von Glauber, the bath physician, when he came to visit her, found that the poor lady made no progress to recovery. Meanwhile Pen got well rapidly; slept with immense perseverance twelve hours out of the twenty-four; ate huge meals; and, at the end of a couple of months, had almost got back the bodily strength and weight which he had possessed before his illness.

After they had passed some fifteen days at their place of rest and refreshment, a letter came from Major Pendennis announcing his speedy arrival at Rosenbad, and, soon after the letter, the Major himself made his appearance accompanied by Morgan his faithful valet, without whom the old gentleman could not move. When

the Major travelled he wore a jaunty and juvenile travelling costume; to see his back still you would have taken him for one of the young fellows whose slim waist and youthful appearance Warrington was beginning to envy. It was not until the worthy man began to move, that the observer remarked that Time had weakened his ancient knees, and had unkindly interfered to impede the action of the natty little varnished boots in which the gay old traveller still pinched his toes. There were magnates, both of our own country and of foreign nations, present that autumn at Rosenbad. The elder Pendennis read over the strangers' list with great gratification on the night of his arrival, was pleased to find several of his acquaintances among the great folks, and would have the honour of presenting his nephew to a German Grand Duchess, a Russian Princess, and an English Marquis, before many days were over: nor was Pen by any means averse to making the acquaintance of these great personages, having a liking for polite life, and all the splendours and amenities belonging to it. That very evening the resolute old gentleman, leaning on his nephew's arm, made his appearance in the halls of the Kursaal, and lost or won a napoleon or two at the table of *Trente-et-quarante*. He did not play to lose, he said, or to win; but he did as other folks did, and betted his napoleon and took his luck as it came. He pointed out the Russians and Spaniards gambling for heaps of gold, and denounced their eagerness as something sordid and barbarous; an English gentleman should play where the fashion is play, but should not elate or depress himself at the sport; and he told how he had seen his friend the Marquis of Steyne, when Lord Gaunt, lose eighteen thousand at a sitting, and break the bank three nights

running at Paris, without ever showing the least emotion at his defeat or victory—" And that's what I call being an English gentleman, Pen, my dear boy," the old gentleman said, warming as he prattled about his recollections—" what I call the great manner only remains with us and with a few families in France." And as Russian Princesses passed him, whose reputation had long ceased to be doubtful, and damaged English ladies, who are constantly seen in company of their faithful attendant for the time being in these gay haunts of dissipation, the old Major, with eager garrulity and mischievous relish, told his nephew wonderful particulars regarding the lives of these heroines; and diverted the young man with a thousand scandals. Egad, he felt himself quite young again, he remarked to Pen, as, rouged and grinning, her enormous chasseur behind her bearing her shawl, the Princess Obstropski smiled and recognised and accosted him. He remembered her in '14 when she was an actress of the Paris Boulevard, and the Emperor Alexander's aide-de-camp Obstropski (a man of great talents, who knew a good deal about the Emperor Paul's death, and was a devil to play) married her. He most courteously and respectfully asked leave to call upon the Princess, and to present to her his nephew, Mr. Arthur Pendennis; and he pointed out to the latter a half-dozen of other personages whose names were as famous, and whose histories were as edifying. What would poor Helen have thought, could she have heard those tales, or known to what kind of people her brother-in-law was presenting her son? Only once, leaning on Arthur's arm, she had passed through the room where the green tables were prepared for play, and the croaking croupiers were calling out their fatal words of *Rouge gagne*

and *Couleur perd.* She had shrunk terrified out of the Pandemonium, imploring Pen, extorting from him a promise, on his word of honour, that he would never play at those tables; and the scene which so frightened the simple widow only amused the worldly old veteran, and made him young again! He could breathe the air cheer-

fully which stifled her. Her right was not his right: his food was her poison. Human creatures are constituted thus differently, and with this variety the marvellous world is peopled. To the credit of Mr. Pen, let it be said, that he kept honestly the promise made to his mother, and stoutly told his uncle of his intention to abide by it.

When the Major arrived, his presence somehow cast a damp upon at least three of the persons of our little party—upon Laura, who had anything but respect for him; upon Warrington, whose manner towards him

showed an involuntary haughtiness and contempt; and upon the timid and alarmed widow, who dreaded lest he should interfere with her darling, though almost desperate, projects for her boy. And, indeed, the Major, unknown to himself, was the bearer of tidings which were to bring about a catastrophe in the affairs of all our friends.

Pen with his two ladies had apartments in the town of Rosenbad; honest Warrington had lodgings hard by; the Major, on arrival at Rosenbad, had, as befitted his dignity, taken up his quarters at one of the great hotels, at the Roman Emperor or the Four Seasons, where two or three hundred gamblers, pleasure-seekers, or invalids, sate down and over-ate themselves daily at the enormous table-d'hôte. To this hotel Pen went on the morning after the Major's arrival, dutifully to pay his respects to his uncle, and found the latter's sitting-room duly prepared and arranged by Mr. Morgan, with the Major's hats brushed, and his coats laid out: his despatch-boxes and umbrella-cases, his guide-books, passports, maps, and other elaborate necessaries of the English traveller, all as trim and ready as they could be in their master's own room in Jermyn Street. Everything was ready, from the medicine-bottle fresh filled from the pharmacien's, down to the old fellow's prayer-book without which he never travelled, for he made a point of appearing at the English church at every place which he honoured with a stay. "Everybody did it," he said; "every English gentleman did it:" and this pious man would as soon have thought of not calling upon the English ambassador in a Continental town, as of not showing himself at the national place of worship.

The old gentleman had been to take one of the baths

for which Rosenbad is famous, and which everybody takes, and his after-bath toilet was not yet completed when Pen arrived. The elder called out to Arthur in a cheery voice from the inner apartment, in which he and Morgan were engaged, and the valet presently came in, bearing a little packet to Pen's address—Mr. Arthur's letters and papers, Morgan said, which he had brought from Mr. Arthur's chambers in London, and which consisted chiefly of numbers of the "Pall Mall Gazette," which our friend Mr. Finucane thought his *collaborateur* would like to see. The papers were tied together: the letters in an envelope, addressed to Pen, in the last-named gentleman's handwriting.

Amongst the letters there was a little note addressed, as a former letter we have heard of had been, to "Arthur Pendennis, Esquire," which Arthur opened with a start and a blush, and read with a very keen pang of interest, and sorrow, and regard. She had come to Arthur's house, Fanny Bolton said—and found that he was gone —gone away to Germany without ever leaving a word for her—or answer to her last letter, in which she prayed but for one word of kindness—or the books which he had promised her in happier times, before he was ill, and which she should like to keep in remembrance of him. She said she would not reproach those who had found her at his bedside when he was in the fever, and knew nobody, and who had turned the poor girl away without a word. She thought she should have died, she said, of that, but Doctor Goodenough had kindly tended her, and kep' her life, when, perhaps, the keeping of it was of no good, and she forgave everybody: and as for Arthur, she would pray for him for ever. And when he was so ill, and they cut off his hair, she had made so free

as to keep one little lock for herself, and that she owned. And might she still keep it, or would his mamma order that that should be gave up too? She was willing to obey him in all things, and couldn't but remember that once he was so kind, oh! so good and kind! to his poor Fanny.

When Major Pendennis, fresh and smirking from his toilet, came out of his bed-room to his sitting-room, he found Arthur, with this note before him, and an expression of savage anger on his face, which surprised the elder gentleman. "What news from London, my boy?" he rather faintly asked; "are the duns at you, that you look so glum?"

"Do you know anything about this letter, sir?" Arthur asked.

"What letter, my good sir?" said the other drily, at once perceiving what had happened.

"You know what I mean—about, about Miss—about Fanny Bolton—the poor dear little girl," Arthur broke out. "When was she in my room? Was she there when I was delirious—I fancied she was—was she? Who sent her out of my chambers? Who intercepted her letters to me? Who dared to do it? Did you do it, uncle?"

"It's not my practice to tamper with gentlemen's letters, or to answer damned impertinent questions," Major Pendennis cried out, in a great tremor of emotion and indignation. "There was a girl in your rooms when I came up at great personal inconvenience, daymy—and to meet with a return of this kind for my affection to you, is not pleasant, by Gad, sir—not at all pleasant."

"That's not the question, sir," Arthur said hotly—"and—and, I beg your pardon, uncle. You were, you always have been, most kind to me: but I say again,

did you say anything harsh to this poor girl? Did you send her away from me?"

"I never spoke a word to the girl," the uncle said, "and I never sent her away from you, and know no more about her, and wish to know no more about her, than about the man in the moon."

"Then it's my mother that did it," Arthur broke out. "Did my mother send that poor child away?"

"I repeat I know nothing about it, sir," the elder said testily. "Let's change the subject, if you please."

"I'll never forgive the person who did it," said Arthur, bouncing up and seizing his hat.

The Major cried out, "Stop, Arthur, for God's sake, stop!" but before he had uttered his sentence, Arthur had rushed out of the room, and at the next minute the Major saw him striding rapidly down the street that led towards his home.

"Get breakfast!" said the old fellow to Morgan, and he wagged his head and sighed as he looked out of the window. "Poor Helen—poor soul! There'll be a row. I knew there would: and, begad, all the fat's in the fire."

When Pen reached home he only found Warrington in the ladies' drawing-room, waiting their arrival in order to conduct them to the place where the little English colony at Rosenbad held their Sunday church. Helen and Laura had not appeared as yet; the former was ailing, and her daughter was with her. Pen's wrath was so great that he could not defer expressing it. He flung Fanny's letter across the table to his friend. "Look there, Warrington," he said; "she tended me in my illness, she rescued me out of the jaws of death, and this is the way they have treated the dear little creature. They have kept her letters from me; they have treated

me like a child, and her like a dog, poor thing! My mother has done this."

"If she has, you must remember it is your mother," Warrington interposed.

"It only makes the crime the greater, because it is she who has done it," Pen answered. "She ought to have been the poor girl's defender, not her enemy; she ought to go down on her knees and ask pardon of her. I ought! I will! I am shocked at the cruelty which has been shown her. What? She gave me her all, and this is her return! She sacrifices everything for me, and they spurn her."

"Hush!" said Warrington, "they can hear you from the next room."

"Hear? let them hear!" Pen cried out, only so much the louder. "Those may overhear my talk who intercept my letters. I say this poor girl has been shamefully used, and I will do my best to right her; I will."

The door of the neighbouring room opened, and Laura came forth with pale and stern face. She looked at Pen with glances from which beamed pride, defiance, aversion. "Arthur, your mother is very ill," she said; "it is a pity that you should speak so loud as to disturb her."

"It is a pity that I should have been obliged to speak at all," Pen answered. "And I have more to say before I have done."

"I should think what you have to say will hardly be fit for me to hear," Laura said, haughtily.

"You are welcome to hear it or not, as you like," said Mr. Pen. "I shall go in now, and speak to my mother."

Laura came rapidly forward, so that she should not be overheard by her friend within. "Not now, sir," she

said to Pen. "You may kill her if you do. Your conduct has gone far enough to make her wretched."

"What conduct?" cried out Pen, in a fury. "Who dares impugn it? Who dares meddle with me? Is it you who are the instigator of this persecution?"

"I said before it was a subject of which it did not become me to hear or to speak," Laura said. "But as for mamma, if she had acted otherwise than she did with regard to—to the person about whom you seem to take such an interest, it would have been I that must have quitted your house, and not that—that person."

"By heavens! this is too much," Pen cried out, with a violent execration.

"Perhaps that is what you wished," Laura said, tossing her head up. "No more of this, if you please; I am not accustomed to hear such subjects spoken of in such language;" and with a stately curtsey the young lady passed to her friend's room, looking her adversary full in the face as she retreated and closed the door upon him.

Pen was bewildered with wonder, perplexity, fury, at this monstrous and unreasonable persecution. He burst out into a loud and bitter laugh as Laura quitted him, and with sneers and revilings, as a man who jeers under an operation, ridiculed at once his own pain and his persecutor's anger. The laugh, which was one of bitter humour, and no unmanly or unkindly expression of suffering under most cruel and unmerited torture, was heard in the next apartment, as some of his unlucky previous expressions had been, and, like them, entirely misinterpreted by the hearers. It struck like a dagger into the wounded and tender heart of Helen; it pierced Laura, and inflamed the high-spirited girl with scorn

and anger. "And it was to this hardened libertine," she thought—"to this boaster of low intrigues, that I had given my heart away." "He breaks the most sacred laws," thought Helen. "He prefers the creature of his passion to his own mother; and when he is upbraided, he laughs, and glories in his crime. 'She gave me her all,' I heard him say it," argued the poor widow; "and he boasts of it, and laughs, and breaks his mother's heart." The emotion, the shame, the grief, the mortification almost killed her. She felt she should die of his unkindness.

Warrington thought of Laura's speech—"Perhaps that is what you wished." "She loves Pen still," he said. "It was jealousy made her speak."—"Come away, Pen. Come away, and let us go to church and get calm. You must explain this matter to your mother. She does not appear to know the truth: nor do you quite, my good fellow. Come away, and let us talk about it." And again he muttered to himself, "'Perhaps that is what you wished.' Yes, she loves him. Why shouldn't she love him? Whom else would I have her love? What can she be to me but the dearest and the fairest and the best of women?"

So, leaving the women similarly engaged within, the two gentlemen walked away, each occupied with his own thoughts, and silent for a considerable space. "I must set this matter right," thought honest George, "as she loves him still—I must set his mother's mind right about the other woman." And with this charitable thought, the good fellow began to tell more at large what Bows had said to him regarding Miss Bolton's behaviour and fickleness, and he described how the girl was no better than a light-minded flirt; and, perhaps, he exaggerated

the good humour and contentedness which he had himself, as he thought, witnessed in her behaviour in the scene with Mr. Huxter.

Now, all Bows's statements had been coloured by an insane jealousy and rage on that old man's part; and instead of allaying Pen's renascent desire to see his little conquest again, Warrington's accounts inflamed and angered Pendennis, and made him more anxious than before to set himself right, as he persisted in phrasing it, with Fanny. They arrived at the church-door presently; but scarce one word of the service, and not a syllable of Mr. Shamble's sermon, did either of them comprehend, probably—so much was each engaged with his own private speculations. The Major came up to them after the service, with his well-brushed hat and wig, and his jauntiest, most cheerful, air. He complimented them upon being seen at church; again he said that every *comme-il-faut* person made a point of attending the English service abroad; and he walked back with the young men, prattling to them in garrulous good-humour, and making bows to his acquaintances as they passed; and thinking innocently that Pen and George were both highly delighted by his anecdotes, which they suffered to run on in a scornful and silent acquiescence.

At the time of Mr. Shamble's sermon (an erratic Anglican divine, hired for the season at places of English resort, and addicted to debts, drinking, and even to roulette, it was said), Pen, chafing under the persecution which his womankind inflicted upon him, had been meditating a great act of revolt and of justice, as he had worked himself up to believe; and Warrington on his part had been thinking that a crisis in his affairs had likewise come, and that it was necessary for him to break

away from a connection which every day made more and more wretched and dear to him. Yes, the time was come. He took those fatal words, "Perhaps that is what you wished," as a text for a gloomy homily, which he preached to himself, in the dark crypt of his own heart, whilst Mr. Shamble was feebly giving utterance to his sermon.

CHAPTER LVII

"FAIROAKS TO LET"

UR poor widow (with the assistance of her faithful Martha of Fairoaks, who laughed and wondered at the German ways, and superintended the affairs of the simple household) had made a little feast in honour of Major Pendennis's arrival, of which, however, only the Major and his two younger friends partook, for Helen sent to say that she was too unwell to dine at their table, and Laura bore her company. The Major talked for the party, and did not perceive, or choose to perceive, what a gloom and silence pervaded the other two sharers of the modest dinner. It was evening before Helen and Laura came into the sitting-room to join the company there. She came in leaning on Laura with her back to the waning light, so that Arthur could not see how pallid and woe-stricken her face was; and as she went up to Pen, whom she had not seen during the day, and placed her fond arms on his shoulder and kissed him tenderly, Laura left her, and moved away to another part of the room. Pen remarked that his mother's voice and her whole frame trembled, her hand was clammy cold as she put it up to his forehead, piteously embracing him. The spectacle of her misery only added, somehow, to the wrath and testiness of the young man. He scarcely re-

turned the kiss which the suffering lady gave him: and the countenance with which he met the appeal of her look was hard and cruel. "She persecutes me," he thought within himself, "and she comes to me with the air of a martyr." "You look very ill, my child," she said. "I don't like to see you look in that way." And she tottered to a sofa, still holding one of his passive hands in her thin cold clinging fingers.

"I have had much to annoy me, mother," Pen said, with a throbbing breast: and as he spoke Helen's heart began to beat so, that she sate almost dead and speechless with terror.

Warrington, Laura, and Major Pendennis, all remained breathless, aware that the storm was about to break.

"I have had letters from London," Arthur continued, "and one that has given me more pain than I ever had in my life. It tells me that former letters of mine have been intercepted and purloined away from me;—that—that a young creature who has shown the greatest love and care for me, has been most cruelly used by—by you, mother."

"For God's sake stop," cried out Warrington. "She's ill—don't you see she is ill?"

"Let him go on," said the widow, faintly.

"Let him go on and kill her," said Laura, rushing up to her mother's side. "Speak on, sir, and see her die."

"It is you who are cruel," cried Pen, more exasperated and more savage, because his own heart, naturally soft and weak, revolted indignantly at the injustice of the very suffering which was laid at his door. "It is you who are cruel, who attribute all this pain to me:

it is you who are cruel with your wicked reproaches, your wicked doubts of me, your wicked persecutions of those who love me,—yes, those who love me, and who brave everything for me, and whom you despise and trample upon because they are of lower degree than you. Shall I tell you what I will do,—what I am resolved to do, now that I know what your conduct has been?—I will go back to this poor girl whom you turned out of my doors, and ask her to come back and share my home with me. I'll defy the pride which persecutes her, and the pitiless suspicion which insults her and me."

"Do you mean, Pen, that you—" here the widow, with eager eyes and outstretched hands, was breaking out, but Laura stopped her: "Silence, hush, dear mother," she cried, and the widow hushed. Savagely as Pen spoke, she was only too eager to hear what more he had to say. "Go on, Arthur, go on, Arthur," was all she said, almost swooning away as she spoke.

"By Gad, I say he shan't go on, or I won't hear him, by Gad," the Major said, trembling too in his wrath. "If you choose, sir, after all we've done for you, after all I've done for you myself, to insult your mother and disgrace your name, by allying yourself with a low-born kitchen-girl, go and do it, by Gad,—but let us, ma'am, have no more to do with him. I wash my hands of you, sir,—I wash my hands of you. I'm an old fellow,—I ain't long for this world. I come of as ancient and honourable a family as any in England, and I did hope, before I went off the hooks, by Gad, that the fellow that I'd liked, and brought up, and nursed through life, by Jove, would do something to show me that our name—yes, the name of Pendennis, was left undishonoured behind us; but if he won't, dammy, I say, amen. By G—,

both my father and my brother Jack were the proudest men in England, and I never would have thought that there would come this disgrace to my name,—never—and — and I'm ashamed that it's Arthur Pendennis." The old fellow's voice here broke off into a sob: it was the second time that Arthur had brought tears from those wrinkled lids.

The sound of his breaking voice stayed Pen's anger instantly, and he stopped pacing the room, as he had been doing until that moment. Laura was by Helen's sofa; and Warrington had remained hitherto an almost silent but not uninterested spectator of the family storm. As the parties were talking, it had grown almost dark; and after the lull which succeeded the passionate outbreak of the Major, George's deep voice, as it here broke trembling into the twilight room, was heard with no small emotion by all.

"Will you let me tell you something about myself, my kind friends?" he said,—"you have been so good to me, ma'am — you have been so kind to me, Laura—I hope I may call you so sometimes—my dear Pen and I have been such friends that—that I have long wanted to tell you my story such as it is, and would have told it to you earlier but that it is a sad one and contains another's secret. However, it may do good for Arthur to know it—it is right that every one here should. It will divert you from thinking about a subject which, out of a fatal misconception, has caused a great deal of pain to all of you. May I please tell you, Mrs. Pendennis?"

"Pray speak," was all Helen said; and indeed she was not much heeding; her mind was full of another idea with which Pen's words had supplied her, and she was

in a terror of hope that what he had hinted might be as she wished.

George filled himself a bumper of wine and emptied it, and began to speak. "You all of you know how you see me," he said,—"a man without a desire to make an advance in the world: careless about reputation; and living in a garret and from hand to mouth, though I have friends and a name, and I dare say capabilities of my own, that would serve me if I had a mind. But mind I have none. I shall die in that garret most likely, and alone. I nailed myself to that doom in early life. Shall I tell you what it was that interested me about Arthur years ago, and made me inclined towards him when I first saw him? The men from our college at Oxbridge brought up accounts of that early affair with the Chatteris actress, about whom Pen has often talked to me since; and who, but for the Major's generalship, might have been your daughter-in-law, ma'am. I can't see Pen in the dark, but he blushes, I'm sure; and I dare say Miss Bell does; and my friend Major Pendennis, I dare say, laughs as he ought to do—for he won. What would have been Arthur's lot now had he been tied at nineteen to an illiterate woman older than himself, with no qualities in common between them, to make one a companion for the other, no equality, no confidence, and no love speedily? What could he have been but most miserable? And when he spoke just now and threatened a similar union, be sure it was but a threat occasioned by anger, which you must give me leave to say, ma'am, was very natural on his part, for after a generous and manly conduct—let me say who know the circumstances well—most generous and manly and self-denying (which is rare with him),—he has met from some

friends of his with a most unkind suspicion, and has had to complain of the unfair treatment of another innocent person, towards whom he and you all are under much obligation."

The widow was going to get up here, and Warrington, seeing her attempt to rise, said, "Do I tire you, ma'am?"

"O no—go on—go on," said Helen, delighted, and he continued.

"I liked him, you see, because of that early history of his, which had come to my ears in college gossip, and because I like a man, if you will pardon me for saying so, Miss Laura, who shows that he can have a great unreasonable attachment for a woman. That was why we became friends—and are all friends here—for always, aren't we?" he added, in a lower voice, leaning over to her, "and Pen has been a great comfort and companion to a lonely and unfortunate man.

"I am not complaining of my lot, you see; for no man's is what he would have it; and up in my garret, where you left the flowers, and with my old books and my pipe for a wife, I am pretty contented, and only occasionally envy other men, whose careers in life are more brilliant, or who can solace their ill fortune by what Fate and my own fault has deprived me of—the affection of a woman or a child." Here there came a sigh from somewhere near Warrington in the dark, and a hand was held out in his direction, which, however, was instantly withdrawn, for the prudery of our females is such, that before all expression of feeling, or natural kindness and regard, a woman is taught to think of herself and the proprieties, and to be ready to blush at the very slightest notice; and checking, as, of course, it

ought, this spontaneous motion, modesty drew up again, kindly friendship shrank back ashamed of itself, and Warrington resumed his history. "My fate is such as I made it, and not lucky for me or for others involved in it.

"I, too, had an adventure before I went to college; and there was no one to save me as Major Pendennis saved Pen. Pardon me, Miss Laura, if I tell this story before you. It is as well that you all of you should hear my confession. Before I went to college, as a boy of eighteen, I was at a private tutor's, and there, like Arthur, I became attached, or fancied I was attached, to a woman of a much lower degree and a greater age than my own. You shrink from me—"

"No, I don't," Laura said, and here the hand went out resolutely, and laid itself in Warrington's. She had divined his story from some previous hints let fall by him, and his first words at its commencement.

"She was a yeoman's daughter in the neighbourhood," Warrington said, with rather a faltering voice, "and I fancied—what all young men fancy. Her parents knew who my father was, and encouraged me, with all sorts of coarse artifices and scoundrel flatteries, which I see now, about their house. To do her justice, I own she never cared for me, but was forced into what happened by the threats and compulsion of her family. Would to God that I had not been deceived: but in these matters we are deceived because we wish to be so, and I thought I loved that poor woman.

"What could come of such a marriage? I found, before long, that I was married to a boor. She could not comprehend one subject that interested me. Her dullness palled upon me till I grew to loathe it. And after

some time of a wretched, furtive union—I must tell you all—I found letters somewhere (and such letters they were!) which showed me that her heart, such as it was, had never been mine, but had always belonged to a person of her own degree.

"At my father's death, I paid what debts I had contracted at college, and settled every shilling which remained to me in an annuity upon—upon those who bore my name, on condition that they should hide themselves away, and not assume it. They have kept that condition, as they would break it, for more money. If I had earned fame or reputation, that woman would have come to claim it: if I had made a name for myself, those who had no right to it would have borne it; and I entered life at twenty, God help me—hopeless and ruined beyond remission. I was the boyish victim of vulgar cheats, and, perhaps, it is only of late I have found out how hard—ah, how hard—it is to forgive them. I told you the moral before, Pen; and now I have told you the fable. Beware how you marry out of your degree. I was made for a better lot than this, I think: but God has awarded me this one—and so, you see, it is for me to look on, and see others successful and others happy, with a heart that shall be as little bitter as possible."

"By Gad, sir," cried the Major, in high good-humour, "I intended you to marry Miss Laura here."

"And, by Gad, Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound," Warrington said.

"How d'ye mean a thousand? it was only a pony, sir," replied the Major simply, at which the other laughed.

As for Helen, she was so delighted, that she started up, and said, "God bless you—God for ever bless you,

Mr. Warrington;" and kissed both his hands, and ran up to Pen, and fell into his arms.

"Yes, dearest mother," he said as he held her to him, and with a noble tenderness and emotion, embraced and forgave her. "I am innocent, and my dear, dear mother has done me a wrong."

"Oh, yes, my child, I have wronged you, thank God, I have wronged you!" Helen whispered. "Come away, Arthur—not here—I want to ask my child to forgive me—and—and my God, to forgive me; and to bless you, and love you, my son."

He led her, tottering, into her room, and closed the door, as the three touched spectators of the reconciliation looked on in pleased silence. Ever after, ever after, the tender accents of that voice faltering sweetly at his ear —the look of the sacred eyes beaming with an affection unutterable—the quiver of the fond lips smiling mournfully—were remembered by the young man. And at his best moments, and at his hours of trial and grief, and at his times of success or well-doing, the mother's face looked down upon him, and blessed him with its gaze of pity and purity, as he saw it in that night when she yet lingered with him; and when she seemed, ere she quite left him, an angel, transfigured and glorified with love—for which love, as for the greatest of the bounties and wonders of God's provision for us, let us kneel and thank Our Father.

The moon had risen by this time; Arthur recollected well afterwards how it lighted up his mother's sweet pale face. Their talk, or his rather, for she scarcely could speak, was more tender and confidential than it had been for years before. He was the frank and generous boy of her early days and love. He told her the story, the mistake regarding which had caused her so much pain—

his struggles to fly from temptation, and his thankfulness that he had been able to overcome it. He never would do the girl wrong, never; or wound his own honour or his mother's pure heart. The threat that he would return was uttered in a moment of exasperation, of which he repented. He never would see her again. But his mother said, Yes, he should; and it was she who had been proud and culpable—and she would like to give Fanny Bolton something—and she begged her dear boy's pardon for opening the letter—and she would write to the young girl, if,—if she had time. Poor thing! was it not natural that she should love her Arthur? And again she kissed him, and she blessed him.

As they were talking the clock struck nine, and Helen reminded him how, when he was a little boy, she used to go up to his bed-room at that hour, and hear him say Our Father. And once more, oh, once more, the young man fell down at his mother's sacred knees, and sobbed out the prayer which the Divine Tenderness uttered for us, and which has been echoed for twenty ages since by millions of sinful and humbled men. And as he spoke the last words of the supplication, the mother's head fell down on her boy's, and her arms closed round him, and together they repeated the words " for ever and ever," and " Amen."

A little time after, it might have been a quarter of an hour, Laura heard Arthur's voice calling from within, " Laura! Laura! " She rushed into the room instantly, and found the young man still on his knees, and holding his mother's hand. Helen's head had sunk back and was quite pale in the moon. Pen looked round, scared with a ghastly terror. " Help, Laura, help! " he said—" she's fainted—she's—"

Laura screamed, and fell by the side of Helen. The

shriek brought Warrington and Major Pendennis and the servants to the room. The sainted woman was dead. The last emotion of her soul here was joy, to be henceforth unchequered and eternal. The tender heart beat no more; it was to have no more pangs, no more doubts, no more griefs and trials. Its last throb was love; and Helen's last breath was a benediction.

The melancholy party bent their way speedily homewards, and Helen was laid by her husband's side at Clavering, in the old church where she had prayed so often. For a while Laura went to stay with Dr. Portman, who read the service over his dear sister departed, amidst his own sobs and those of the little congregation which assembled round Helen's tomb. There were not many who cared for her, or who spoke of her when gone. Scarcely more than of a nun in a cloister did people know of that pious and gentle lady. A few words among the cottagers whom her bounty was accustomed to relieve, a little talk from house to house at Clavering, where this lady told how their neighbour died of a complaint of the heart; whilst that speculated upon the amount of property which the widow had left; and a third wondered whether Arthur would let Fairoaks or live in it, and expected that he would not be long getting through his property,—this was all, and except with one or two who cherished her, the kind soul was forgotten by the next market-day. Would you desire that grief for you should last for a few more weeks? and does after-life seem less solitary, provided that our names, when we "go down into silence," are echoing on this side of the grave yet for a little while, and human voices are still talking about us?

She was gone, the pure soul, whom only two or three loved and knew. The great blank she left was in Laura's heart, to whom her love had been everything, and who had now but to worship her memory. "I am glad that she gave me her blessing before she went away," Warrington said to Pen; and as for Arthur, with a humble acknowledgment and wonder at so much affection, he hardly dared to ask of Heaven to make him worthy of it, though he felt that a saint there was interceding for him.

All the lady's affairs were found in perfect order, and her little property ready for transmission to her son, in trust for whom she held it. Papers in her desk showed that she had long been aware of the complaint, one of the heart, under which she laboured, and knew that it would suddenly remove her: and a prayer was found in her handwriting, asking that her end might be, as it was, in the arms of her son.

Laura and Arthur talked over her sayings, all of which the former most fondly remembered, to the young man's shame somewhat, who thought how much greater her love had been for Helen than his own. He referred himself entirely to Laura to know what Helen would have wished should be done; what poor persons she would have liked to relieve; what legacies or remembrances she would have wished to transmit. They packed up the vase which Helen in her gratitude had destined to Dr. Goodenough, and duly sent it to the kind Doctor; a silver coffee-pot, which she used, was sent off to Dr. Portman; a diamond ring, with her hair, was given with affectionate greeting to Warrington.

It must have been a hard day for poor Laura when she went over to Fairoaks first, and to the little room

which she had occupied, and which was hers no more, and to the widow's own blank chamber in which those two had passed so many beloved hours. There, of course, were the clothes in the wardrobe, the cushion on which she prayed, the chair at the toilette: the glass that was no more to reflect her dear sad face. After she had been here awhile, Pen knocked and led her down stairs to the parlour again, and made her drink a little wine, and said, "God bless you," as she touched the glass. "Nothing shall ever be changed in your room," he said —"it is always your room—it is always my sister's room. Shall it not be so, Laura?" and Laura said, "Yes!"

Among the widow's papers was found a packet, marked by the widow "Letters from Laura's father," and which Arthur gave to her. They were the letters which had passed between the cousins in the early days before the marriage of either of them. The ink was faded in which they were written: the tears dried out that both perhaps had shed over them: the grief healed now whose bitterness they chronicled; the friends doubtless united whose parting on earth had caused to both pangs so cruel. And Laura learned fully now for the first time what the tie was which had bound her so tenderly to Helen: how faithfully her more than mother had cherished her father's memory, how truly she had loved him, how meekly resigned him.

One legacy of his mother's Pen remembered, of which Laura could have no cognizance. It was that wish of Helen's to make some present to Fanny Bolton; and Pen wrote to her, putting his letter under an envelope to Mr. Bows, and requesting that gentleman to read it before he delivered it to Fanny. "Dear Fanny," Pen

said, " I have to acknowledge two letters from you, one of which was delayed in my illness " (Pen found the first letter in his mother's desk after her decease, and the reading it gave him a strange pang), " and to thank you, my kind nurse and friend, who watched me so tenderly during my fever. And I have to tell you that the last words of my dear mother, who is no more, were words of good-will and gratitude to you for nursing me: and she said she would have written to you, had she had time—that she would like to ask your pardon if she had harshly treated you—and that she would beg you to show your forgiveness by accepting some token of friendship and regard from her." Pen concluded by saying that his friend, George Warrington, Esq., of Lamb Court, Temple, was trustee of a little sum of money, of which the interest would be paid to her until she became of age, or changed her name, which would always be affectionately remembered by her grateful friend, A. Pendennis. The sum was in truth but small, although enough to make a little heiress of Fanny Bolton; whose parents were appeased, and whose father said Mr. P. had acted quite as the gentleman—though Bows growled out that to plaster a wounded heart with a bank-note was an easy kind of sympathy; and poor Fanny felt only too clearly that Pen's letter was one of farewell.

" Sending hundred-pound notes to porters' daughters is all dev'lish well," old Major Pendennis said to his nephew (whom, as the proprietor of Fairoaks and the head of the family, he now treated with marked deference and civility), " and as there was a little ready money at the bank, and your poor mother wished it, there's perhaps no harm done. But, my good lad, I'd

have you to remember that you've not above five hundred a year, though, thanks to me, the world gives you credit for being a doosid deal better off; and, on my knees, I beg you, my boy, don't break into your capital. Stick to it, sir; don't speculate with it, sir; keep your land, and don't borrow on it. Tatham tells me that the Chatteris branch of the railway may—will almost certainly pass through Chatteris, and if it can be brought on this side of the Brawl, sir, and through your fields, they'll be worth a dev'lish deal of money, and your five hundred a year will jump up to eight or nine. Whatever it is, keep it, I implore you keep it. And I say, Pen, I think you should give up living in those dirty chambers in the Temple and get a decent lodging. And I should have a man, sir, to wait upon me; and a horse or two in town in the season. All this will pretty well swallow up your income, and I know you must live close. But remember you have a certain place in society, and you can't afford to cut a poor figure in the world. What are you going to do in the winter? You don't intend to stay down here, or, I suppose, to go on writing for that—what-d'ye-call'em—that newspaper?"

"Warrington and I are going abroad again, sir, for a little, and then we shall see what is to be done," Arthur replied.

"And you'll let Fairoaks, of course. Good school in the neighbourhood; cheap country; dev'lish nice place for East India colonels, or families wanting to retire. I'll speak about it at the club; there are lots of fellows at the club want a place of that sort."

"I hope Laura will live in it for the winter, at least, and will make it her home," Arthur replied: at which the Major pish'd and psha'd, and said that there ought to

be convents, begad, for English ladies, and wished that Miss Bell had not been there to interfere with the arrangements of the family, and that she would mope herself to death alone in that place.

Indeed, it would have been a very dismal abode for poor Laura, who was not too happy either in Doctor Portman's household, and in the town where too many things reminded her of the dear parent whom she had lost. But old Lady Rockminster, who adored her young friend Laura, as soon as she read in the paper of her loss, and of her presence in the country, rushed over from Baymouth, where the old lady was staying, and insisted that Laura should remain six months, twelve months, all her life with her; and to her ladyship's house, Martha from Fairoaks, as *femme de chambre,* accompanied her young mistress.

Pen and Warrington saw her depart. It was difficult to say which of the young men seemed to regard her the most tenderly. "Your cousin is pert and rather vulgar, my dear, but he seems to have a good heart," little Lady Rockminster said, who said her say about everybody—"but I like Bluebeard best. Tell me, is he *touché au cœur?*"

"Mr. Warrington has been long—engaged," Laura said, dropping her eyes.

"Nonsense, child! And good heavens, my dear! that's a pretty diamond cross. What do you mean by wearing it in the morning?"

"Arthur—my brother, gave it me just now. It was—it was—" She could not finish the sentence. The carriage passed over the bridge, and by the dear, dear gate of Fairoaks—home no more.

CHAPTER LVIII

OLD FRIENDS

IT chanced at that great English festival, at which all London takes a holiday upon Epsom Downs, that a great number of the personages to whom we have been introduced in the course of this history, were assembled to see the Derby. In a comfortable open carriage, which had been brought to the ground by a pair of horses, might be seen Mrs. Bungay, of Paternoster Row, attired like Solomon in all his glory, and having by her side modest Mrs. Shandon, for whom, since the commencement of their acquaintance, the worthy publisher's lady had maintained a steady friendship. Bungay, having recreated himself with a copious luncheon, was madly shying at the sticks hard by, till the perspiration ran off his bald pate. Shandon was shambling about among the drinking-tents and gipsies: Finucane constant in attendance on the two ladies, to whom gentlemen of their acquaintance, and connected with the publishing house, came up to pay a visit.

Among others, Mr. Archer came up to make her his bow, and told Mrs. Bungay who was on the course. Yonder was the Prime Minister: his lordship had just

told him to back Borax for the race; but Archer thought Muffineer the better horse. He pointed out countless dukes and grandees to the delighted Mrs. Bungay. "Look yonder in the Grand Stand," he said. "There sits the Chinese Ambassador with the Mandarins of his suite. Fou-choo-foo brought me over letters of introduction from the Governor-General of India, my most intimate friend, and I was for some time very kind to him, and he had his chopsticks laid for him at my table whenever he chose to come and dine. But he brought his own cook with him, and—would you believe it, Mrs. Bungay?—one day, when I was out, and the Ambassador was with Mrs. Archer in our garden eating gooseberries, of which the Chinese are passionately fond, the beast of a cook, seeing my wife's dear little Blenheim spaniel, (that we had from the Duke of Marlborough himself, whose ancestor's life Mrs. Archer's great-great-grandfather saved at the battle of Malplaquet,) seized upon the poor little devil, cut his throat, and skinned him, and served him up stuffed with forced-meat in the second course."

"Law!" said Mrs. Bungay.

"You may fancy my wife's agony when she knew what had happened! The cook came screaming up stairs, and told us that she had found poor Fido's skin in the area, just after we had all of us tasted of the dish! She never would speak to the Ambassador again—never; and, upon my word, he has never been to dine with us since. The Lord Mayor, who did me the honour to dine, liked the dish very much; and, eaten with green peas, it tastes rather like duck."

"You don't say so, now!" cried the astonished publisher's lady.

"Fact, upon my word. Look at that lady in blue, seated by the Ambassador: that is Lady Flamingo, and they say she is going to be married to him, and return to Pekin with his Excellency. She is getting her feet squeezed down on purpose. But she'll only cripple herself, and will never be able to do it—never. My wife has the smallest foot in England, and wears shoes for a six-years-old child; but what is that to a Chinese lady's foot, Mrs. Bungay?"

"Who is that carriage as Mr. Pendennis is with, Mr. Archer?" Mrs. Bungay presently asked. "He and Mr. Warrington was here jest now. He's 'aughty in his manners, that Mr. Pendennis, and well he may be, for I'm told he keeps tip-top company. 'As he 'ad a large fortune left him, Mr. Archer? He's in black still, I see."

"Eighteen hundred a year in land, and twenty-two thousand five hundred in the Three-and-a-half per Cents; that's about it," said Mr. Archer.

"Law! why, you know everything, Mr. A.!" cried the lady of Paternoster Row.

"I happen to know, because I was called in about poor Mrs. Pendennis's will," Mr. Archer replied. "Pendennis's uncle, the Major, seldom does anything without me; and as he is likely to be extravagant we've tied up the property, so that he can't make ducks-and-drakes with it.—How do you do, my lord?—Do you know that gentleman, ladies? You have read his speeches in the House; it is Lord Rochester."

"Lord Fiddlestick," cried out Finucane, from the box. "Sure it's Tom Staples, of the 'Morning Advertiser,' Archer."

"Is it?" Archer said, simply. "Well, I'm very

short-sighted, and upon my word I thought it was Rochester. That gentleman with the double opera-glass (another nod) is Lord John; and the tall man with him, don't you know him? is Sir James."

"You know 'em because you see 'em in the House," growled Finucane.

"I know them because they are kind enough to allow me to call them my most intimate friends," Archer continued. "Look at the Duke of Hampshire; what a pattern of a fine old English gentleman! He never misses 'the Derby.' 'Archer,' he said to me only yesterday, 'I have been at sixty-five Derbies! appeared on the field for the first time on a piebald pony when I was seven years old, with my father, the Prince of Wales, and Colonel Hanger; and only missing two races,—one when I had the measles at Eton; and one in the Waterloo year, when I was with my friend Wellington in Flanders.'"

"And who is that yellow carriage, with the pink and yellow parasols, that Mr. Pendennis is talking to, and ever so many gentlemen?" asked Mrs. Bungay.

"That is Lady Clavering, of Clavering Park, next estate to my friend Pendennis. That is the young son and heir upon the box; he's awfully tipsy, the little scamp! and the young lady is Miss Amory, Lady Clavering's daughter by a first marriage, and uncommonly sweet upon my friend Pendennis; but I've reason to think he has his heart fixed elsewhere. You have heard of young Mr. Foker—the great brewer, Foker, you know—he was going to hang himself in consequence of a fatal passion for Miss Amory, who refused him, but was cut down just in time by his valet, and is now abroad, under a keeper."

"How happy that young fellow is!" sighed Mrs. Bungay. "Who'd have thought when he came so quiet and demure to dine with us, three or four years ago, he would turn out such a grand character! Why, I saw his name at Court the other day, and presented by the

Marquis of Steyne and all; and in every party of the nobility his name's down as sure as a gun."

"I introduced him a good deal when he first came up to town," Mr. Archer said, "and his uncle, Major Pendennis, did the rest. Hallo! There's Cobden here, of all men in the world! I must go and speak to him. Good-by, Mrs. Bungay. Good morning, Mrs. Shandon."

An hour previous to this time, and at a different part of the course, there might have been seen an old stage-coach, on the battered roof of which a crowd of shabby raffs were stamping and hallooing, as the great event of the day—the Derby race—rushed over the green sward, and by the shouting millions of people assembled to view that magnificent scene. This was Wheeler's (the "Harlequin's Head") drag, which had brought down a company of choice spirits from Bow Street, with a slap-up luncheon in the "boot." As the whirling race flashed by each of the choice spirits bellowed out the name of the horse or the colours which he thought or he hoped might be foremost. "The Cornet!" "It's Muffineer!" "It's blue sleeves!" "Yallow cap! yallow cap! yallow cap!" and so forth, yelled the gentlemen sportsmen, during that delicious and thrilling minute before the contest was decided; and as the fluttering signal blew out, showing the number of the famous horse Podasokus as winner of the race, one of the gentlemen on the "Harlequin's Head" drag sprang up off the roof, as if he was a pigeon and about to fly away to London or York with the news.

But his elation did not lift him many inches from his standing-place, to which he came down again on the instant, causing the boards of the crazy old coach-roof to crack with the weight of his joy. "Hurray, hurray!" he bawled out, "Podasokus is the horse! Supper for ten, Wheeler, my boy. Ask you all round of course, and damn the expense."

And the gentlemen on the carriage, the shabby swaggerers, the dubious bucks, said, "Thank you—congratulate you, Colonel; sup with you with pleasure;" and whispered to one another, "The Colonel stands to win

fifteen hundred, and he got the odds from a good man, too."

And each of the shabby bucks and dusky dandies began to eye his neighbour with suspicion, lest that neighbour, taking his advantage, should get the Colonel into a lonely place and borrow money of him. And the winner on Podasokus could not be alone during the whole of that afternoon, so closely did his friends watch him and each other.

At another part of the course you might have seen a vehicle, certainly more modest, if not more shabby than that battered coach which had brought down the choice spirits from the "Harlequin's Head;" this was cab No. 2002, which had conveyed a gentleman and two ladies from the cab-stand in the Strand: whereof one of the ladies, as she sate on the box of the cab enjoying with her mamma and their companion a repast of lobster-salad and bitter ale, looked so fresh and pretty that many of the splendid young dandies who were strolling about the course, and enjoying themselves at the noble diversion of Sticks, and talking to the beautifully dressed ladies in the beautiful carriages on the hill, forsook these fascinations to have a glance at the smiling and rosy-cheeked lass on the cab. The blushes of youth and good-humour mantled on the girl's cheeks, and played over that fair countenance like the pretty shining cloudlets on the serene sky overhead; the elder lady's cheek was red too; but that was a permanent mottled rose, deepening only as it received fresh draughts of pale ale and brandy-and-water, until her face emulated the rich shell of the lobster which she devoured.

The gentleman who escorted these two ladies was most active in attendance upon them: here on the course,

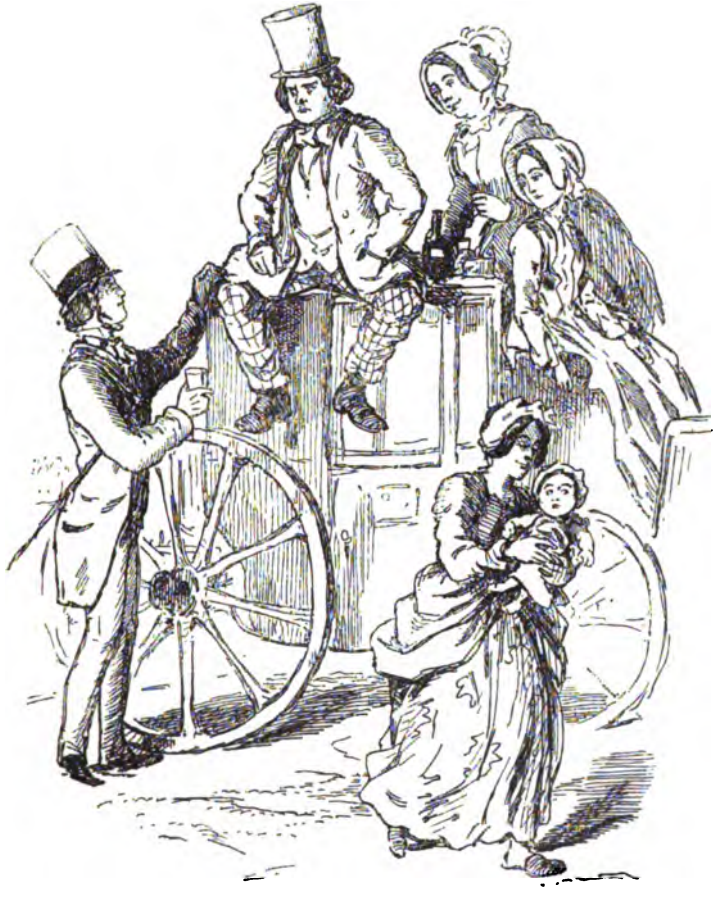
as he had been during the previous journey. During the whole of that animated and delightful drive from London, his jokes had never ceased. He spoke up undauntedly to the most awful drags full of the biggest and most solemn guardsmen; as to the humblest donkey-chaise in which Bob the dustman was driving Molly to the race. He had fired astonishing volleys of what is called "chaff" into endless windows as he passed; into lines of grinning girls' schools; into little regiments of shouting urchins hurraying behind the railings of their Classical and Commercial Academies; into casements whence smiling maid-servants, and nurses tossing babies, or demure old maiden ladies with dissenting countenances, were looking. And the pretty girl in the straw bonnet with pink ribbon, and her mamma, the devourer of lobsters, had both agreed that when he was in "spirits" there was nothing like that Mr. Sam. He had crammed the cab with trophies won from the bankrupt proprietors of the Sticks hard by, and with countless pincushions, wooden apples, backy-boxes, Jack-in-the-boxes, and little soldiers. He had brought up a gipsy with a tawny child in her arms to tell the fortunes of the ladies: and the only cloud which momentarily obscured the sunshine of that happy party, was when the teller of fate informed the young lady that she had had reason to beware of a fair man, who was false to her: that she had had a bad illness, and that she would find that a dark man would prove true.

The girl looked very much abashed at this news: her mother and the young man interchanged signs of wonder and intelligence. Perhaps the conjuror had used the same words to a hundred different carriages on that day.

Making his way solitary amongst the crowd and the carriages, and noting, according to his wont, the various circumstances and characters which the animated scene presented, a young friend of ours came suddenly upon cab 2002, and the little group of persons assembled on the outside of the vehicle. As he caught sight of the young lady on the box, she started and turned pale: her mother became redder than ever: the heretofore gay and triumphant Mr. Sam immediately assumed a fierce and suspicious look, and his eyes turned savagely from Fanny Bolton (whom the reader, no doubt, has recognised in the young lady of the cab) to Arthur Pendennis, advancing to meet her.

Arthur, too, looked dark and suspicious on perceiving Mr. Samuel Huxter in company with his old acquaintances: but his suspicion was that of alarmed morality, and, I dare say, highly creditable to Mr. Arthur: like the suspicion of Mrs. Lynx, when she sees Mr. Brown and Mrs. Jones talking together, or when she remarks Mrs. Lamb twice or thrice in a handsome opera-box. There *may* be no harm in the conversation of Mr. B. and Mrs. J.: and Mrs. Lamb's opera-box (though she notoriously can't afford one) may be honestly come by: but yet a moralist like Mrs. Lynx has a right to the little precautionary fright: and Arthur was no doubt justified in adopting that severe demeanour of his.

Fanny's heart began to patter violently: Huxter's fists, plunged into the pockets of his paletot, clenched themselves involuntarily, and armed themselves, as it were, in ambush: Mrs. Bolton began to talk with all her might, and with a wonderful volubility: and Lor'! she was so 'appy to see Mr. Pendennis, and how well he



Mr. Arthur and Mr. Samuel

was a lookin', and we'd been talkin' about Mr. P. only jest before; hadn't we, Fanny? and if this was the famous Hepsom races that they talked so much about, she didn't care, for her part, if she never saw them again. And how was Major Pendennis, and that kind Mr. Warrington, who brought Mr. P.'s great kindness to Fanny; and she never would forget it, never: and Mr. Warrington was so tall, he almost broke his 'ead up against their lodge door. You recollect Mr. Warrington a knockin' of his head—don't you, Fanny?

Whilst Mrs. Bolton was so discoursing, I wonder how many thousands of thoughts passed through Fanny's mind, and what dear times, sad struggles, lonely griefs, and subsequent shame-faced consolations were recalled to her? What pangs had the poor little thing, as she thought how much she had loved him, and that she loved him no more? There he stood, about whom she was going to die ten months since, dandified, supercilious, with a black crape to his white hat, and jet buttons in his shirt-front: and a pink in his coat, that some one else had probably given him: with the tightest lavender-coloured gloves sewn with black: and the smallest of canes. And Mr. Huxter wore no gloves, and great Blucher boots, and smelt very much of tobacco certainly; and looked, oh, it must be owned, he looked as if a bucket of water would do him a great deal of good! All these thoughts, and a myriad of others, rushed through Fanny's mind as her mamma was delivering herself of her speech, and as the girl, from under her eyes, surveyed Pendennis—surveyed him entirely from head to foot, the circle on his white forehead that his hat left when he lifted it (his beautiful, beautiful hair had grown again), the trinkets at his watch-chain,

the ring on his hand under his glove, the neat shining boot, so, so unlike Sam's high-low!—and after her hand had given a little twittering pressure to the lavender-coloured kid grasp which was held out to it, and after her mother had delivered herself of her speech, all Fanny could find to say was,—"This is Mr. Samuel Huxter whom you knew formerly, I believe, sir; Mr. Samuel, you know you knew Mr. Pendennis formerly—and—and, will you take a little refreshment?"

These little words, tremulous and uncoloured as they were, yet were understood by Pendennis in such a manner as to take a great load of suspicion from off his mind—of remorse, perhaps, from his heart. The frown on the countenance of the prince of Fairoaks disappeared, and a good-natured smile and a knowing twinkle of the eyes illuminated his highness's countenance. "I am very thirsty," he said, "and I will be glad to drink your health, Fanny; and I hope Mr. Huxter will pardon me for having been very rude to him the last time we met, and when I was so ill and out of spirits, that indeed I scarcely knew what I said." And herewith the lavender-coloured dexter kid-glove was handed out, in token of amity, to Huxter.

The dirty fist in the young surgeon's pocket was obliged to undouble itself, and come out of its ambush disarmed. The poor fellow himself felt, as he laid it in Pen's hand, how hot his own was, and how black—it left black marks on Pen's gloves; he saw them,—he would have liked to have clenched it again and dashed it into the other's good-humoured face; and have seen, there upon that ground, with Fanny, with all England looking on, which was the best man—he Sam Huxter of Bartholomew's, or that grinning dandy.

Pen, with ineffable good-humour, took a glass—he didn't mind what it was—he was content to drink after the ladies; and he filled it with frothing lukewarm beer, which he pronounced to be delicious, and which he drank cordially to the health of the party.

As he was drinking and talking on in an engaging manner, a young lady in a shot dove-coloured dress, with a white parasol lined with pink, and the prettiest dove-coloured boots that ever stepped, passed by Pen, leaning on the arm of a stalwart gentleman with a military moustache.

The young lady clenched her little fist, and gave a mischievous side-look as she passed Pen. He of the moustachios burst out into a jolly laugh. He had taken off his hat to the ladies of cab No. 2002. You should have seen Fanny Bolton's eyes watching after the dove-coloured young lady! Immediately Huxter perceived the direction which they took, they ceased looking after the dove-coloured nymph, and they turned and looked into Sam Huxter's orbs with the most artless good-humoured expression.

"What a beautiful creature!" Fanny said. "What a lovely dress! Did you remark, Mr. Sam, such little, little hands?"

"It was Capting Strong," said Mrs. Bolton: "and who was the young woman, I wonder?"

"A neighbour of mine in the country—Miss Amory," Arthur said,—"Lady Clavering's daughter. You've seen Sir Francis often in Shepherd's Inn, Mrs. Bolton."

As he spoke, Fanny built up a perfect romance in three volumes—love—faithlessness—splendid marriage at St. George's, Hanover Square—broken-hearted maid—and Sam Huxter was not the hero of that story—poor

Sam, who by this time had got out an exceedingly rank Cuba cigar, and was smoking it under Fanny's little nose.

After that confounded prig Pendennis joined and left the party, the sun was less bright to Sam Huxter, the sky less blue—the Sticks had no attraction for him —the bitter beer was hot and undrinkable—the world was changed. He had a quantity of peas and a tin pea-shooter in the pocket of the cab for amusement on the homeward route. He didn't take them out, and forgot their existence until some other wag, on their return from the races, fired a volley into Sam's sad face; upon which salute, after a few oaths indicative of surprise, he burst into a savage and sardonic laugh.

But Fanny was charming all the way home. She coaxed, and snuggled, and smiled. She laughed pretty laughs; she admired everything; she took out the darling little Jack-in-the-boxes, and was *so* obliged to Sam. And when they got home, and Mr. Huxter, still with darkness on his countenance, was taking a frigid leave of her—she burst into tears, and said he was a naughty unkind thing.

Upon which, with a burst of emotion almost as emphatic as hers, the young surgeon held the girl in his arms—swore that she was an angel, and that he was a jealous brute; owned that he was unworthy of her, and that he had no right to hate Pendennis; and asked her, implored her, to say once more that she—

That she what?—The end of the question and Fanny's answer were pronounced by lips that were so near each other, that no bystander could hear the words. Mrs. Bolton only said, " Come, come, Mr. H.—no nonsense, if you please; and I think you've acted like a wicked

Mr. Samuel asks a question

wretch, and been most uncommon cruel to Fanny, that I do."

When Arthur left No. 2002, he went to pay his respects to the carriage to which, and to the side of her mamma, the dove-coloured author of *Mes Larmes* had by this time returned. Indefatigable old Major Pendennis was in waiting upon Lady Clavering, and had occupied the back seat in her carriage; the box being in possession of young Hopeful, under the care of Captain Strong.

A number of dandies, and men of a certain fashion—of military bucks, of young rakes of the public offices, of those who may be styled men's men rather than ladies'—had come about the carriage during its station on the hill—and had exchanged a word or two with Lady Clavering, and a little talk (a little "chaff" some of the most elegant of the men styled their conversation) with Miss Amory. They had offered her sportive bets, and exchanged with her all sorts of free-talk and knowing innuendoes. They pointed out to her who was on the course: and the "who" was not always the person a young lady should know.

When Pen came up to Lady Clavering's carriage, he had to push his way through a crowd of these young bucks who were paying their court to Miss Amory, in order to arrive as near that young lady, who beckoned him by many pretty signals to her side.

"Je l'ai vue," she said; "elle a de bien beaux yeux; vous êtes un monstre!"

"Why monster?" said Pen, with a laugh; "Honi soit qui mal y pense. My young friend, yonder, is as well protected as any young lady in Christendom. She

has her mamma on one side, her *prétendu* on the other. Could any harm happen to a girl between those two?"

"One does not know what may or may not arrive," said Miss Blanche, in French, "when a girl has the mind, and when she is pursued by a wicked monster like you. Figure to yourself, Colonel, that I come to find Monsieur, your nephew, near to a cab, by two ladies, and a man, oh, such a man! and who ate lobsters, and who laughed, who laughed!"

"It did not strike me that the man laughed," Pen said. "And as for lobsters, I thought he would have liked to eat me after the lobsters. He shooks hands with me, and griped me so, that he bruised my glove black and blue. He is a young surgeon. He comes from Clavering. Don't you remember the gilt pestle and mortar in High Street?"

"If he attends you when you are sick," continued Miss Amory, "he will kill you. He will serve you right; for you are a monster."

The perpetual recurrence to the word "monster" jarred upon Pen. "She speaks about these matters a great deal too lightly," he thought. "If I had been a monster, as she calls it, she would have received me just the same. This is not the way in which an English lady should speak or think. Laura would not speak in that way, thank God;" and as he thought so, his own countenance fell.

"Of what are you thinking? Are you going to *bouder* me at present?" Blanche asked. "Major, scold your *méchant* nephew. He does not amuse me at all. He is as *bête* as Captain Crackenbury."

"What are you saying about me, Miss Amory?" said the guardsman, with a grin. "If it's anything good,

say it in English, for I don't understand French when it's spoke so devilish quick."

"It *ain't* anything good, Crack," said Crackenbury's fellow, Captain Clinker. "Let's come away, and don't spoil sport. They say Pendennis is sweet upon her."

"I'm told he's a devilish clever fellow," sighed Crackenbury. "Lady Violet Lebas says he's a devilish clever fellow. He wrote a work, or a poem, or something; and he writes those devilish clever things in the—in the papers, you know. Dammy, I wish *I* was a clever fellow, Clinker."

"That's past wishing for, Crack, my boy," the other said. "I can't write a good book, but I think I can make a pretty good one on the Derby. What a flat Clavering is! And the Begum! I like that old Begum. She's worth ten of her daughter. How pleased the old girl was at winning the lottery!"

"Clavering's safe to pay up, ain't he?" asked Captain Crackenbury.

"I hope so," said his friend; and they disappeared, to enjoy themselves among the Sticks.

Before the end of the day's amusements, many more gentlemen of Lady Clavering's acquaintance came up to her carriage, and chatted with the party which it contained. The worthy lady was in high spirits and good-humour, laughing and talking according to her wont, and offering refreshments to all her friends, until her ample baskets and bottles were emptied, and her servants and postilions were in such a royal state of excitement as servants and postilions commonly are upon the Derby day.

The Major remarked that some of the visitors to the carriage appeared to look with rather queer and mean-

ing glances towards its owner. "How easily she takes it!" one man whispered to another. "The Begum's made of money," the friend replied. "How easily she takes what?" thought old Pendennis. "Has anybody lost any money?" Lady Clavering said she was happy in the morning because Sir Francis had promised her not to bet.

Mr. Welbore, the country neighbour of the Claverings, was passing the carriage, when he was called back by the Begum, who rallied him for wishing to cut her. "Why didn't he come before? Why didn't he come to lunch?" Her ladyship was in great delight, she told him—she told everybody, that she had won five pounds in a lottery. As she conveyed this piece of intelligence to him, Mr. Welbore looked so particularly knowing, and withal melancholy, that a dismal apprehension seized upon Major Pendennis. "He would go and look after the horses and those rascals of postilions, who were so long in coming round." When he came back to the carriage, his usually benign and smirking countenance was obscured by some sorrow. "What is the matter with you now?" the good-natured Begum asked. The Major pretended a headache from the fatigue and sunshine of the day. The carriage wheeled off the course and took its way Londonwards, not the least brilliant equipage in that vast and picturesque procession. The tipsy drivers dashed gallantly over the turf, amidst the admiration of foot-passengers, the ironical cheers of the little donkey-carriages and spring vans, and the loud objurgations of horse-and-chaise men, with whom the reckless post-boys came in contact. The jolly Begum looked the picture of good-humour as she reclined on her splendid cushions; the lovely Sylphide smiled with

languid elegance. Many an honest holiday-maker with his family wadded into a tax-cart, many a cheap dandy working his way home on his weary hack, admired that brilliant turn-out, and thought, no doubt, how happy those "swells" must be. Strong sat on the box still, with a lordly voice calling to the post-boys and the crowd. Master Frank had been put inside of the carriage and was asleep there by the side of the Major, dozing away the effects of the constant luncheon and champagne of which he had freely partaken.

The Major was revolving in his mind meanwhile the news the receipt of which had made him so grave. "If Sir Francis Clavering goes on in this way," Pendennis the elder thought, "this little tipsy rascal will be as bankrupt as his father and grandfather before him. The Begum's fortune can't stand such drains upon it: no fortune can stand them: she has paid his debts half-a-dozen times already. A few years more of the turf, and a few coups like this will ruin her."

"Don't you think we could get up races at Clavering, mamma?" Miss Amory asked. "Yes, we must have them there again. There were races there in the old times, the good old times. It's a national amusement, you know: and we could have a Clavering ball: and we might have dances for the tenantry, and rustic sports in the park—Oh, it would be charming."

"Capital fun," said mamma. "Wouldn't it, Major?"

"The turf is a very expensive amusement, my dear lady," Major Pendennis answered, with such a rueful face, that the Begum rallied him, and asked laughingly whether he had lost money on the race?

After a slumber of about an hour and a half, the heir

of the house began to exhibit symptoms of wakefulness, stretching his youthful arms over the Major's face, and kicking his sister's knees as she sate opposite to him. When the amiable youth was quite restored to consciousness, he began a sprightly conversation.

"I say, ma," he said, "I've gone, and done it this time, I have."

"What have you gone and done, Franky, dear?" asked mamma.

"How much is seventeen half-crowns? Two pound and half-a-crown, ain't it? I drew Borax in our lottery, but I bought Podasokus and Man-milliner of Leggat minor for two open tarts and a bottle of ginger-beer."

"You little wicked gambling creature, how dare you begin so soon?" cried Miss Amory.

"Hold *your* tongue, if you please. Who ever asked *your* leave, miss?" the brother said. "And I say, ma—"

"Well, Franky, dear?"

"You'll tip me all the same, you know, when I go back—" and here he broke out into a laugh. "I say, ma, shall I tell you something?"

The Begum expressed her desire to hear this something, and her son and heir continued:—

"When me and Strong was down at the grand stand after the race, and I was talking to Leggat minor, who was there with his governor, I saw pa look as savage as a bear. And I say, ma, Leggat minor told me that he heard his governor say that pa had lost seven thousand backing the favourite. I'll never back the favourite when I'm of age. No, no—hang me if I do; leave me alone, Strong, will you?"

"Captain Strong! Captain Strong! is this true?"

cried out the unfortunate Begum. "Has Sir Francis been betting again? He promised me he wouldn't. He gave me his word of honour he wouldn't."

Strong, from his place on the box, had overheard the end of young Clavering's communication, and was trying in vain to stop his unlucky tongue.

"I'm afraid it's true, ma'am," he said, turning round. "I deplore the loss as much as you can. He promised me as he promised you; but the play is too strong for him! he can't refrain from it."

Lady Clavering at this sad news burst into a fit of tears. She deplored her wretched fate as the most miserable of women. She declared she would separate, and pay no more debts for this ungrateful man. She narrated with tearful volubility a score of stories only too authentic, which showed how her husband had deceived, and how constantly she had befriended him: and in this melancholy condition, whilst young Hopeful was thinking about the two guineas which he himself had won; and the Major revolving, in his darkened mind, whether certain plans which he had been forming had better not be abandoned; the splendid carriage drove up at length to the Begum's house in Grosvenor Place; the idlers and boys lingering about the place to witness, according to public wont, the close of the Derby Day, and cheering the carriage as it drew up, and envying the happy folks who descended from it.

"And it's for the son of this man that I am made a beggar!" Blanche said, quivering with anger, as she walked up stairs leaning on the Major's arm—"for this cheat—for this black-leg—for this liar—for this robber of women."

"Calm yourself, my dear Miss Blanche," the old gen-

tleman said; "I pray calm yourself. You have been hardly treated, most unjustly. But remember that you have always a friend in me; and trust to an old fellow who will try and serve you."

And the young lady, and the heir of the hopeful house of Clavering, having retired to their beds, the remaining three of the Epsom party remained for some time in deep consultation.

CHAPTER LIX

EXPLANATIONS

ALMOST a year, as the reader will perceive, has passed since an event described a few pages back. Arthur's black coat is about to be exchanged for a blue one. His person has undergone other more pleasing and remarkable changes. His wig has been laid aside, and his hair, though somewhat thinner, has returned to public view. And he has had the honour of appearing at Court in the uniform of a Cornet of the Clavering troop of the ——shire Yeomanry Cavalry, being presented to the Sovereign by the Marquis of Steyne.

This was a measure strongly and pathetically urged by Arthur's uncle. The Major would not hear of a year passing before this ceremony of gentlemanhood was gone through. The old gentleman thought that his nephew should belong to some rather more select Club than the Polyanthus; and has announced everywhere in the world his disappointment that the young man's property has turned out not by any means as well as he could have hoped, and is under fifteen hundred a year.

That is the amount at which Pendennis's property is set down in the world—where his publishers begin to respect him much more than formerly, and where even mammas are by no means uncivil to him. For if the pretty daughters are, naturally, to marry people of very different expectations—at any rate, he will be eligible for the plain ones: and if the brilliant and fascinating Mira is to hook an Earl, poor little Beatrice, who has one shoulder higher than the other, must hang on to some boor through life, and why should not Mr. Pendennis be her support? In the very first winter after the accession to his mother's fortune, Mrs. Hawxby in a country-house caused her Beatrice to learn billiards from Mr. Pendennis, and would be driven by nobody but him in the pony carriage, because he was literary and her Beatrice was literary too, and declared that the young man, under the instigation of his horrid old uncle, had behaved most infamously in trifling with Beatrice's feelings. The truth is the old gentleman, who knew Mrs. Hawxby's character, and how desperately that lady would practise upon unwary young men, had come to the country-house in question and carried Arthur out of the danger of her immediate claws, though not out of the reach of her tongue. The elder Pendennis would have had his nephew pass a part of the Christmas at Clavering, whither the family had returned; but Arthur had not the heart for that. Clavering was too near poor old Fairoaks; and that was too full of sad recollections for the young man.

We have lost sight of the Claverings, too, until their re-appearance upon the Epsom race-ground, and must give a brief account of them in the interval. During the past year, the world has not treated any member of

the Clavering family very kindly. Lady Clavering, one of the best-natured women that ever enjoyed a good dinner, or made a slip in grammar, has had her appetite and good-nature sadly tried by constant family grievances, and disputes such as make the efforts of the best French cook unpalatable, and the most delicately-stuffed sofa-cushion hard to lie on. "I'd rather have a turnip, Strong, for dessert, than that pine-apple, and all them Muscatel grapes, from Clavering," says poor Lady Clavering, looking at her dinner-table, and confiding her griefs to her faithful friend, "if I could but have a little quiet to eat it with. Oh, how much happier I was when I was a widow, and before all this money fell in to me!"

The Clavering family had indeed made a false start in life, and had got neither comfort, nor position, nor thanks for the hospitalities which they administered, nor a return of kindness from the people whom they entertained. The success of their first London season was doubtful; and their failure afterwards notorious. "Human patience was not great enough to put up with Sir Francis Clavering," people said. "He was too hopelessly low, dull, and disreputable. You could not say what, but there was a taint about the house and its *entourages*. Who was the Begum, with her money, and without her h's, and where did she come from? What an extraordinary little piece of conceit the daughter was, with her Gallicised graces and daring affectations, not fit for well-bred English girls to associate with! What strange people were those they assembled round about them! Sir Francis Clavering was a gambler, living notoriously in the society of black-legs and profligates. Hely Clinker, who was in his regiment, said that

he not only cheated at cards, but showed the white feather. What could Lady Rockminster have meant by taking her up?" After the first season, indeed, Lady Rockminster, who had taken up Lady Clavering, put her down; the great ladies would not take their daughters to her parties: the young men who attended them behaved with the most odious freedom and scornful familiarity; and poor Lady Clavering herself avowed that she was obliged to take what she called "the canal" into her parlour, because the tiptops wouldn't come.

She had not the slightest ill-will towards "the canal," the poor dear lady, or any pride about herself, or idea that she was better than her neighbour; but she had taken implicitly the orders which on her entry into the world her social godmother had given her: she had been willing to know whom they knew, and ask whom they asked. The "canal," in fact, was much pleasanter than what is called "society;" but, as we said before, that to leave a mistress is easy, while, on the contrary, to be left by her is cruel; so you may give up society without any great pang, or anything but a sensation of relief at the parting; but severe are the mortifications and pains you have if society gives up you.

One young man of fashion, we have mentioned, who at least it might have been expected would have been found faithful amongst the faithless, and Harry Foker, Esq., was indeed that young man. But he had not managed matters with prudence; and the unhappy passion at first confided to Pen, became notorious and ridiculous to the town, was carried to the ears of his weak and fond mother, and finally brought under the cognisance of the bald-headed and inflexible Foker senior.

When Mr. Foker learned this disagreeable news,

there took place between him and his son a violent and painful scene which ended in the poor little gentleman's banishment from England for a year, with a positive order to return at the expiration of that time and complete his marriage with his cousin; or to retire into private life and three hundred a year altogether, and never see parent or brewery more. Mr. Henry Foker went away then, carrying with him that grief and care which passes free at the strictest Custom-houses, and which proverbially accompanies the exile, and with this crape over his eyes, even the Parisian Boulevard looked melancholy to him, and the sky of Italy black.

To Sir Francis Clavering, that year was a most unfortunate one. The events described in the last chapter came to complete the ruin of the year. It was that year of grace in which, as our sporting readers may remember, Lord Harrowhill's horse (he was a classical young nobleman, and named his stud out of the Iliad)—when Podasokus won the "Derby," to the dismay of the knowing ones, who pronounced the winning horse's name in various extraordinary ways, and who backed Borax, who was nowhere in the race. Sir Francis Clavering, who was intimate with some of the most rascally characters of the turf, and, of course, had valuable "information," had laid heavy odds against the winning horse, and backed the favourite freely, and the result of his dealings was, as his son correctly stated to poor Lady Clavering, a loss of seven thousand pounds.

Indeed, it was a cruel blow upon the lady, who had discharged her husband's debts many times over: who had received as many times his oaths and promises of amendment; who had paid his money-lenders and horse-dealers; who had furnished his town and country

houses, and who was called upon now instantly to meet this enormous sum, the penalty of her cowardly husband's extravagance.

It has been described in former pages how the elder Pendennis had become the adviser of the Clavering family, and, in his quality of intimate friend of the house, had gone over every room of it, and even seen that ugly closet which we all of us have, and in which, according to the proverb, the family skeleton is locked up. About the Baronet's pecuniary matters, if the Major did not know, it was because Clavering himself did not know them, and hid them from himself and others in such a hopeless entanglement of lies, that it was impossible for adviser or attorney or principal to get an accurate knowledge of his affairs. But, concerning Lady Clavering, the Major was much better informed; and when the unlucky mishap of the "Derby" arose, he took upon himself to become completely and thoroughly acquainted with all her means, whatsoever they were; and was now accurately informed of the vast and repeated sacrifices which the widow Amory had made in behalf of her present husband.

He did not conceal,—and he had won no small favour from Miss Blanche by avowing it,—his opinion, that Lady Clavering's daughter had been hardly treated at the expense of her son, by her second marriage: and in his conversations with Lady Clavering had fairly hinted that he thought Miss Blanche ought to have a better provision. We have said that he had already given the widow to understand that he knew *all* the particulars of her early and unfortunate history, having been in India at the time when—when the painful circumstances occurred which had ended in her parting

from her first husband. He could tell her where to find the Calcutta newspaper which contained the account of Amory's trial, and he showed, and the Begum was not a little grateful to him for his forbearance, how, being aware all along of this mishap which had befallen her, he had kept all knowledge of it to himself, and been constantly the friend of her family.

"Interested motives, my dear Lady Clavering," he said, "of course I may have had. We all have interested motives, and mine, I don't conceal from you, was to make a marriage between my nephew and your daughter." To which Lady Clavering, perhaps with some surprise that the Major should choose her family for a union with his own, said she was quite willing to consent.

But frankly he said, "My dear lady, my boy has but five hundred a year, and a wife with ten thousand pounds to her fortune would scarcely better him. We could do better for him than that, permit me to say; and he is a shrewd cautious young fellow who has sown his wild oats now—who has very good parts and plenty of ambition—and whose object in marrying is to better himself. If you and Sir Francis chose—and Sir Francis, take my word for it, will refuse you nothing—you could put Arthur in a way to advance very considerably in the world, and show the stuff which he has in him. Of what use is that seat in Parliament to Clavering, who scarcely ever shows his face in the House, or speaks a word there? I'm told by gentlemen who heard my boy at Oxbridge, that he was famous as an orator, begad!—and once put his foot into the stirrup and mount him, I've no doubt he won't be the last of the field, ma'am. I've tested the chap, and know him pretty well, I think.

He is much too lazy, and careless, and flighty a fellow, to make a jog-trot journey, and arrive, as your lawyers do, at the end of their lives; but give him a start and good friends, and an opportunity, and take my word for it, he'll make himself a name that his sons shall be proud of. I don't see any way for a fellow like him to *parvenir,* but by making a prudent marriage—not with a beggarly heiress—to sit down for life upon a miserable fifteen hundred a year—but with somebody whom he can help, and who can help him forward in the world, and whom he can give a good name and a station in the country, begad, in return for the advantages which she brings him. It would be better for you to have a distinguished son-in-law, than to keep your husband on in Parliament, who's of no good to himself or to anybody else there, and that's, I say, why I've been interested about you, and offer you what I think a good bargain for both."

"You know I look upon Arthur as one of the family almost now," said the good-natured Begum; "he comes and goes when he likes; and the more I think of his dear mother, the more I see there's few people so good—none so good to me. And I'm sure I cried when I heard of her death, and would have gone into mourning for her myself, only black don't become me. And I know who his mother wanted him to marry—Laura, I mean—whom old Lady Rockminster has taken such a fancy to, and no wonder. She's a better girl than my girl. I know both. And my Betsy—Blanche, I mean—ain't been a comfort to me, Major. It's Laura Pen ought to marry."

"Marry on five hundred a year! My dear good soul, you are mad!" Major Pendennis said. "Think over

what I have said to you. Do nothing in your affairs with that unhappy husband of yours without consulting me; and remember that old Pendennis is always your friend."

For some time previous, Pen's uncle had held similar language to Miss Amory. He had pointed out to her the convenience of the match which he had at heart, and was bound to say, that mutual convenience was of all things the very best in the world to marry upon—the only thing. "Look at your love-marriages, my dear young creature. The love-match people are the most notorious of all for quarrelling afterwards; and a girl who runs away with Jack to Gretna Green, constantly runs away with Tom to Switzerland afterwards. The great point in marriage is for people to agree to be useful to one another. The lady brings the means, and the gentleman avails himself of them. My boy's wife brings the horse, and, begad, Pen goes in and wins the plate. That's what I call a sensible union. A couple like that have something to talk to each other about when they come together. If you had Cupid himself to talk to—if Blanche and Pen were Cupid and Psyche, begad—they'd begin to yawn after a few evenings, if they had nothing but sentiment to speak on."

As for Miss Amory, she was contented enough with Pen as long as there was nobody better. And how many other young ladies are like her?—and how many love-marriages carry on well to the last?—and how many sentimental firms do not finish in bankruptcy?—and how many heroic passions don't dwindle down into despicable indifference, or end in shameful defeat?

These views of life and philosophy the Major was constantly, according to his custom, inculcating on Pen,

whose mind was such that he could see the right on both sides of many questions, and, comprehending the sentimental life which was quite out of the reach of the honest Major's intelligence, could understand the practical life too, and accommodate himself, or think he could accommodate himself, to it. So it came to pass that during the spring succeeding his mother's death he was a good deal under the influence of his uncle's advice, and domesticated in Lady Clavering's house; and in a measure was accepted by Miss Amory without being a suitor, and was received without being engaged. The young people were extremely familiar, without being particularly sentimental, and met and parted with each other in perfect good-humour. "And I," thought Pendennis, "am the fellow who eight years ago had a grand passion, and last year was raging in a fever about Briseis!"

Yes, it was the same Pendennis, and time had brought to him, as to the rest of us, its ordinary consequences, consolations, developments. We alter very little. When we talk of this man or that woman being no longer the same person whom we remember in youth, and remark (of course to deplore) changes in our friends, we don't, perhaps, calculate that circumstance only brings out the latent defect or quality, and does not create it. The selfish languor and indifference of to-day's possession is the consequence of the selfish ardour of yesterday's pursuit: the scorn and weariness which cries *vanitas vanitatum* is but the lassitude of the sick appetite palled with pleasure: the insolence of the successful *parvenu* is only the necessary continuance of the career of the needy struggler: our mental changes

are like our grey hairs or our wrinkles—but the fulfilment of the plan of mortal growth and decay: that which is snow-white now was glossy black once; that which is sluggish obesity to-day was boisterous rosy health a few years back; that calm weariness, benevolent, resigned, and disappointed, was ambition, fierce and violent, but a few years since, and has only settled into submissive repose after many a battle and defeat. Lucky he who can bear his failure so generously, and give up his broken sword to Fate the Conqueror with a manly and humble heart! Are you not awe-stricken, you, friendly reader, who, taking the page up for a moment's light reading, lay it down, perchance, for a graver reflection,—to think how you, who have consummated your success or your disaster, may be holding marked station, or a hopeless and nameless place, in the crowd —who have passed through how many struggles of defeat, success, crime, remorse, to yourself only known! —who may have loved and grown cold, wept and laughed again, how often!—to think how you are the same *You,* whom in childhood you remember, before the voyage of life began? It has been prosperous, and you are riding into port, the people huzzaing and the guns saluting,—and the lucky captain bows from the ship's side, and there is a care under the star on his breast which nobody knows of: or you are wrecked, and lashed, hopeless, to a solitary spar out at sea:—the sinking man and the successful one are thinking each about home, very likely, and remembering the time when they were children; alone on the hopeless spar, drowning out of sight; alone in the midst of the crowd applauding you.

CHAPTER LX

CONVERSATIONS

OUR good-natured Begum was at first so much enraged at this last instance of her husband's duplicity and folly, that she refused to give Sir Francis Clavering any aid in order to meet his debts of honour, and declared that she would separate from him, and leave him to the consequences of his incorrigible weakness and waste. After that fatal day's transactions at the Derby, the unlucky gambler was in such a condition of mind that he was disposed to avoid everybody; alike his turf-associates with whom he had made debts which he trembled lest he should not have the means of paying, and his wife, his long-suffering banker, on whom he reasonably doubted whether he should be allowed any longer to draw. When Lady Clavering asked the next morning whether Sir Francis was in the house, she received answer that he had not returned that night, but had sent a messenger to his valet, ordering him to forward clothes and letters by the bearer. Strong knew that he should have a visit or a message from him in the course of that or the sub-

sequent day, and accordingly got a note beseeching him to call upon his distracted friend F. C. at Short's Hotel, Blackfriars, and ask for Mr. Francis there. For the Baronet was a gentleman of that peculiarity of mind that he would rather tell a lie than not, and always began a contest with fortune by running away and hiding himself. The Boots of Mr. Short's establishment, who carried Clavering's message to Grosvenor Place, and brought back his carpet-bag, was instantly aware who was the owner of the bag, and he imparted his information to the footman who was laying the breakfast-table, who carried down the news to the servants' hall, who took it to Mrs. Bonner, my lady's housekeeper and confidential maid, who carried it to my lady. And thus every single person in the Grosvenor Place establishment knew that Sir Francis was in hiding under the name of Francis, at an inn in the Blackfriars Road. And Sir Francis's coachman told the news to other gentlemen's coachmen, who carried it to their masters, and to the neighbouring Tattersall's, where very gloomy anticipations were formed that Sir Francis Clavering was about to make a tour in the Levant.

In the course of that day the number of letters addressed to Sir Francis Clavering, Bart., which found their way to his hall table, was quite remarkable. The French cook sent in his account to my lady; the tradesmen who supplied her ladyship's table, and Messrs. Finer and Gimcrack, the mercers and ornamental dealers, and Madame Crinoline, the eminent milliner, also forwarded their little bills to her ladyship, in company with Miss Amory's private, and by no means inconsiderable, account at each establishment.

In the afternoon of the day after the Derby, when

Strong (after a colloquy with his principal at Short's Hotel, whom he found crying and drinking Curaçoa) called to transact business according to his custom at Grosvenor Place, he found all these suspicious documents ranged in the Baronet's study; and began to open them and examine them with a rueful countenance.

Mrs. Bonner, my lady's maid and housekeeper, came down upon him whilst engaged in this occupation. Mrs. Bonner, a part of the family and as necessary to her mistress as the Chevalier was to Sir Francis, was of course on Lady Clavering's side in the dispute between her and her husband, and as by duty bound even more angry than her ladyship herself.

"She won't pay, if she takes my advice," Mrs. Bonner said. "You'll please to go back to Sir Francis, Captain—and he lurking about in a low public-house and don't dare to face his wife like a man!—and say that we won't pay his debts no longer. We made a man of him, we took him out of gaol (and other folks too perhaps), we've paid his debts over and over again—we set him up in Parliament and gave him a house in town and country, and where he don't dare show his face, the shabby sneak! We've given him the horse he rides and the dinner he eats and the very clothes he has on his back; and we will give him no more. Our fortune, such as is left of it, is left to ourselves, and we won't waste any more of it on this ungrateful man. We'll give him enough to live upon and leave him, that's what we'll do: and that's what you may tell him from Susan Bonner."

Susan Bonner's mistress, hearing of Strong's arrival, sent for him at this juncture, and the Chevalier went up to her ladyship not without hopes that he should find her more tractable than her factotum Mrs. Bonner. Many

a time before had he pleaded his client's cause with Lady Clavering and caused her good-nature to relent. He tried again once more. He painted in dismal colours the situation in which he had found Sir Francis: and would not answer for any consequences which might ensue if he could not find means of meeting his engagements.

"Kill hisself," laughed Mrs. Bonner, "kill hisself, will he? Dying's the best thing he could do." Strong vowed that he had found him with the razors on the table; but at this, in her turn, Lady Clavering laughed bitterly. "He'll do himself no harm, as long as there's a shilling left of which he can rob a poor woman. His life's quite safe, Captain: you may depend upon that. Ah! it was a bad day that ever I set eyes on him."

"He's worse than the first man," cried out my lady's aide-de-camp. "He was a man, he was—a wild devil, but he had the courage of a man—whereas this fellow—what's the use of my lady paying his bills, and selling her diamonds, and forgiving him? He'll be as bad again next year. The very next chance he has he'll be a cheating of her, and robbing of her; and her money will go to keep a pack of rogues and swindlers—I don't mean you, Captain—you've been a good friend to us enough, bating we wish we'd never set eyes on you."

The Chevalier saw from the words which Mrs. Bonner had let slip regarding the diamonds, that the kind Begum was disposed to relent once more at least, and that there were hopes still for his principal.

"Upon my word, ma'am," he said, with a real feeling of sympathy for Lady Clavering's troubles, and admiration for her untiring good-nature, and with a show of enthusiasm which advanced not a little his graceless patron's cause—"anything you say against Clavering, or

Mrs. Bonner here cries out against me, is no better than we deserve, both of us, and it was an unlucky day for you when you saw either. He has behaved cruelly to you: and if you were not the most generous and forgiving woman in the world, I know there would be no chance for him. But you can't let the father of your son be a disgraced man, and send little Frank into the world with such a stain upon him. Tie him down; bind him by any promises you like: I vouch for him that he will subscribe them."

"And break 'em," said Mrs. Bonner.

"And keep 'em this time," cried out Strong. "He must keep them. If you could have seen how he wept, ma'am! 'Oh, Strong,' he said to me, 'it's not for myself I feel now: it's for my boy—it's for the best woman in England, whom I have treated basely—I know I have.' He didn't intend to bet upon this race, ma'am—indeed he didn't. He was cheated into it: all the ring was taken in. He thought he might make the bet quite safely, without the least risk. And it will be a lesson to him for all his life long. To see a man cry—Oh, it's dreadful."

"He don't think much of making my dear Missus cry," said Mrs. Bonner—"poor dear soul!—look if he does, Captain."

"If you've the soul of a man, Clavering," Strong said to his principal, when he recounted this scene to him, "you'll keep your promise this time: and, so help me Heaven! if you break word with her, I'll turn against you and tell all."

"What all?" cried Mr. Francis, to whom his ambassador brought the news back at Short's Hotel, where

Strong found the Baronet crying and drinking Curaçoa.

"Psha! Do you suppose I am a fool?" burst out Strong. "Do you suppose I could have lived so long in the world, Frank Clavering, without having my eyes about me? You know I have but to speak and you are a beggar to-morrow. And I am not the only man who knows your secret."

"Who else does?" gasped Clavering.

"Old Pendennis does, or I am very much mistaken. He recognised the man the first night he saw him, when he came drunk into your house."

"He knows it, does he?" shrieked out Clavering. "Damn him—kill him."

"You'd like to kill us all, wouldn't you, old boy?" said Strong, with a sneer, puffing his cigar.

The Baronet dashed his weak hand against his forehead; perhaps the other had interpreted his wish rightly. "Oh, Strong!" he cried, "if I dared, I'd put an end to myself, for I'm the d——est miserable dog in all England. It's that that makes me so wild and reckless. It's that which makes me take to drink (and he drank, with a trembling hand, a bumper of his fortifier—the Curaçoa), and to live about with these thieves. I know they're thieves, every one of 'em, d——d thieves. And —and how can I help it?—and I didn't know it, you know—and, by Gad, I'm innocent—and until I saw the d——d scoundrel first, I knew no more about it than the dead—and I'll fly, and I'll go abroad out of the reach of the confounded hells, and I'll bury myself in a forest, by Gad! and hang myself up to a tree—and, oh—I'm the most miserable beggar in all England!" And so with more tears, shrieks, and curses, the impotent

wretch vented his grief and deplored his unhappy fate; and, in the midst of groans and despair and blasphemy, vowed his miserable repentance.

The honoured proverb which declares that to be an ill wind which blows good to nobody, was verified in the case of Sir Francis Clavering, and another of the occupants of Mr. Strong's chambers in Shepherd's Inn. The man was "good," by a lucky hap, with whom Colonel Altamont made his bet; and on the settling day of the Derby—as Captain Clinker, who was appointed to settle Sir Francis Clavering's book for him (for Lady Clavering, by the advice of Major Pendennis, would not allow the Baronet to liquidate his own money transactions), paid over the notes to the Baronet's many creditors—Colonel Altamont had the satisfaction of receiving the odds of thirty to one in fifties, which he had taken against the winning horse of the day.

Numbers of the Colonel's friends were present on the occasion to congratulate him on his luck—all Altamont's own set and the gents who met in the private parlour of the convivial Wheeler, my host of the "Harlequin's Head," came to witness their comrade's good fortune, and would have liked, with a generous sympathy for success, to share in it. "Now was the time," Tom Diver had suggested to the Colonel, "to have up the specie ship that was sunk in the Gulf of Mexico, with the three hundred and eighty thousand dollars on board, besides bars and doubloons." "The Tredyddlums were very low—to be bought for an old song—never was such an opportunity for buying shares," Mr. Keightley insinuated; and Jack Holt pressed forward his tobacco-smuggling scheme, the audacity of which pleased the Colonel more than any other of the speculations pro-

posed to him. Then of the "Harlequin's Head" boys: there was Jack Rackstraw, who knew of a pair of horses which the Colonel must buy; Tom Fleet, whose satirical paper, "The Swell," wanted but two hundred pounds of capital to be worth a thousand a year to any man—"with such a power and influence, Colonel, you rogue, and the *entrée* of all the green-rooms in London," Tom urged; whilst little Moss Abrams entreated the Colonel not to listen to these absurd fellows with their humbugging speculations, but to invest his money in some good bills which Moss could get for him, and which would return him fifty per cent. as safe as the Bank of England.

Each and all of these worthies came round the Colonel with their various blandishments; but he had courage enough to resist them, and to button up his notes in the pocket of his coat, and go home to Strong, and "sport" the outer door of the chambers. Honest Strong had given his fellow-lodger good advice about all his acquaintances; and though, when pressed, he did not mind frankly taking twenty pounds himself out of the Colonel's winnings, Strong was a great deal too upright to let others cheat him.

He was not a bad fellow when in good fortune, this Altamont. He ordered a smart livery for Grady, and made poor old Costigan shed tears of quickly dried gratitude by giving him a five-pound note after a snug dinner at the Back Kitchen, and he bought a green shawl for Mrs. Bolton, and a yellow one for Fanny: the most brilliant "sacrifices" of a Regent Street haberdasher's window. And a short time after this, upon her birthday, which happened in the month of June, Miss Amory received from "a friend" a parcel containing an enor-

mous brass-inlaid writing-desk, in which there was a set of amethysts, the most hideous eyes ever looked upon,—a musical snuff-box, and two Keepsakes of the year before last, and accompanied with a couple of gown-pieces of the most astounding colours, the receipt of which goods made the Sylphide laugh and wonder immoderately. Now it is a fact that Colonel Altamont had made a purchase of cigars and French silks from some duffers in Fleet Street about this period; and he was found by Strong in the open Auction-Room in Cheapside, having invested some money in two desks, several pairs of richly-plated candlesticks, a dinner épergne, and a bagatelle-board. The dinner épergne remained at chambers, and figured at the banquets there, which the Colonel gave pretty freely. It seemed beautiful in his eyes, until Jack Holt said it looked as if it had been taken "in a bill." And Jack Holt certainly knew.

The dinners were pretty frequent at chambers, and Sir Francis Clavering condescended to partake of them constantly. His own house was shut up: the successor of Mirobolant, who had sent in his bills so prematurely, was dismissed by the indignant Lady Clavering: the luxuriance of the establishment was greatly pruned and reduced. One of the large footmen was cashiered, upon which the other gave warning, not liking to serve without his mate, or in a family where on'y one footman was kep'. General and severe economical reforms were practised by the Begum in her whole household, in consequence of the extravagance of which her graceless husband had been guilty. The Major was her ladyship's friend; Strong on the part of poor Clavering; her ladyship's lawyer, and the honest Begum herself, executed these reforms with promptitude and severity. After

paying the Baronet's debts, the settlement of which occasioned considerable public scandal, and caused the Baronet to sink even lower in the world's estimation than he had been before, Lady Clavering quitted London for Tunbridge Wells in high dudgeon, refusing to see her reprobate husband, whom nobody pitied. Clavering remained in London patiently, by no means anxious to meet his wife's just indignation, and sneaked in and out of the House of Commons, whence he and Captain Raff and Mr. Marker would go to have a game at billiards and a cigar: or showed in the sporting public-houses; or he might be seen lurking about Lincoln's Inn and his lawyers', where the principals kept him for hours waiting, and the clerks winked at each other, as he sate in their office. No wonder that he relished the dinners at Shepherd's Inn, and was perfectly resigned there: resigned? he was so happy nowhere else; he was wretched amongst his equals, who scorned him—but here he was the chief guest at the table, where they continually addressed him with 'Yes, Sir Francis,' and 'No, Sir Francis;' where he told his wretched jokes, and where he quavered his dreary little French song, after Strong had sung his jovial chorus, and honest Costigan had piped his Irish ditties. Such a jolly ménage as Strong's, with Grady's Irish stew, and the Chevalier's brew of punch after dinner, would have been welcome to many a better man than Clavering, the solitude of whose great house at home frightened him, where he was attended only by the old woman who kept the house, and his valet who sneered at him.

"Yes, dammit," said he, to his friends in Shepherd's Inn. "That fellow of mine, I must turn him away, only I owe him two years' wages, curse him, and can't ask

my lady. He brings me my tea cold of a morning, with a dem'd leaden tea-spoon, and he says my lady's sent all the plate to the banker's because it ain't safe.—Now ain't it hard that she won't trust me with a single tea-spoon; ain't it ungentlemanlike, Altamont? You know my lady's of low birth—that is—I beg your pardon—hem—that is, it's most cruel of her not to show more confidence in me. And the very servants begin to laugh—the dam scoundrels! I'll break every bone in their great hulking bodies, curse 'em, I will.—They don't answer my bell: and—and my man was at Vauxhall last night with one of my dress shirts and my velvet waistcoat on,—I know it was mine—the confounded impudent blackguard—and he went on dancing before my eyes, confound him! I'm sure he'll live to be hanged—he deserves to be hanged—all those infernal rascals of valets."

He was very kind to Altamont now: he listened to the Colonel's loud stories when Altamont described how—when he was working his way home once from New Zealand, where he had been on a whaling expedition—he and his comrades had been obliged to shirk on board at night, to escape from their wives, by Jove—and how the poor devils put out in their canoes when they saw the ship under sail, and paddled madly after her: how he had been lost in the bush once for three months in New South Wales, when he was there once on a trading speculation: how he had seen Boney at Saint Helena, and been presented to him with the rest of the officers of the Indiaman of which he was a mate—to all these tales (and over his cups Altamont told many of them; and it must be owned, lied and bragged a great deal) Sir Francis now listened with great attention; making a point

of drinking wine with Altamont at dinner, and of treating him with every distinction.

"Leave him alone, I know what he's a-coming to," Altamont said, laughing, to Strong, who remonstrated with him, "and leave me alone: I know what I'm a-telling, very well. I was officer on board an Indiaman, so I was: I traded to New South Wales, so I did, in a ship of my own, and lost her. I became officer to the Nawaub, so I did; only me and my royal master have had a difference, Strong—that's it. Who's the better or the worse for what I tell?—or knows anything about me? The other chap is dead—shot in the bush, and his body reckognised at Sydney. If I thought anybody would split, do you think I wouldn't wring his neck? I've done as good before now, Strong—I told you how I did for the overseer before I took leave—but in fair fight I mean—in fair fight; or raythe, he had the best of it. He had his gun and bay'net, and I had only an axe. Fifty of 'em saw it—ay, and cheered me when I did it—and I'd do it again, —— him, wouldn't I? I ain't afraid of anybody; and I'd have the life of the man who split upon me. That's my maxim, and pass me the liquor—*You* wouldn't turn on a man. I know you. You're an honest feller, and will stand by a feller, and have looked death in the face like a man. But as for that lily-livered sneak—that poor lyin' swindlin' cringin' cur of a Clavering—who stands in my shoes—stands in my shoes, hang him! I'll make him pull my boots off and clean 'em, I will. Ha, ha!" Here he burst out into a wild laugh, at which Strong got up and put away the brandy-bottle. The other still laughed good-humouredly. "You're right, old boy," he said; "you always keep your head cool, you do—and when I

begin to talk too much—I say, when I begin to *pitch,* I authorise you, and order you, and command you, to put away the brandy-bottle."

The event for which, with cynical enjoyment, Altamont had been on the look-out, came very speedily. One day, Strong being absent upon an errand for his principal, Sir Francis made his appearance in the chambers, and found the envoy of the Nawaub alone. He abused the world in general for being heartless and unkind to him: he abused his wife for being ungenerous to him: he abused Strong for being ungrateful—hundreds of pounds had he given Ned Strong—been his friend for life and kept him out of gaol, by Jove,—and now Ned was taking her ladyship's side against him and abetting her in her infernal unkind treatment of him. "They've entered into a conspiracy to keep me penniless, Altamont," the Baronet said: "they don't give me as much pocket-money as Frank has at school."

"Why don't you go down to Richmond and borrow of him, Clavering?" Altamont broke out with a savage laugh. "He wouldn't see his poor old beggar of a father without pocket-money, would he?"

"I tell you, I've been obliged to humiliate myself cruelly," Clavering said. "Look here, sir—look here, at these pawn-tickets! Fancy a Member of Parliament and an old English Baronet, by Gad! obliged to put a drawing-room clock and a Buhl inkstand up the spout; and a gold duck's head paper-holder, that I dare say cost my wife five pound, for which they'd only give me fifteen-and-six! Oh, it's a humiliating thing, sir, poverty to a man of my habits; and it's made me shed tears, sir,—tears; and that d——d valet of mine—curse him, I wish he was hanged!—has had the confounded impu-

dence to threaten to tell my lady: as if the things in my own house weren't my own, to sell or to keep, or to fling out of window if I choose—by Gad! the confounded scoundrel."

"Cry a little; don't mind cryin' before me—it'll relieve you, Clavering," the other said. "Why, I say, old feller, what a happy feller I once thought you, and what a miserable son of a gun you really are!"

"It's a shame that they treat me so, ain't it?" Clavering went on—for though ordinarily silent and apathetic, about his own griefs the Baronet could whine for an hour at a time. "And—and, by Gad, sir, I haven't got the money to pay the very cab that's waiting for me at the door; and the porteress, that Mrs. Bolton, lent me three shillin's, and I don't like to ask her for any more: and I asked that d——d old Costigan, the confounded old penniless Irish miscreant, and he hadn't got a shillin', the beggar; and Campion's out of town, or else he'd do a little bill for me, I know he would."

"I thought you swore on your honour to your wife that you wouldn't put your name to paper," said Mr. Altamont, puffing at his cigar.

"Why does she leave me without pocket-money then? Damme, I must have money," cried out the Baronet. "Oh, Am—, oh, Altamont, I'm the most miserable beggar alive."

"You'd like a chap to lend you a twenty-pound note, wouldn't you now?" the other asked.

"If you would, I'd be grateful to you for ever—for ever, my dearest friend," cried Clavering.

"How much would you give? Will you give a fifty-pound bill, at six months, for half down and half in plate?" asked Altamont.

"Yes, I would, so help me —, and pay it on the day," screamed Clavering. "I'll make it payable at my banker's: I'll do anything you like."

"Well, I was only chaffing you. I'll *give* you twenty pound."

"You said a pony," interposed Clavering; "my dear fellow, you said a pony, and I'll be eternally obliged to you; and I'll not take it as a gift—only as a loan, and pay you back in six months. I take my oath I will."

"Well—well—there's the money, Sir Francis Clavering. I ain't a bad fellow. When I've money in my pocket, dammy, I spend it like a man. Here's five-and-twenty for you. Don't be losing it at the hells now. Don't be making a fool of yourself. Go down to Clavering Park, and it'll keep you ever so long. You needn't 'ave butchers' meat: there's pigs, I dare say, on the premises: and you can shoot rabbits for dinner, you know, every day till the game comes in. Besides, the neighbours will ask you about to dinner, you know, sometimes: for you *are* a Baronet, though you have outrun the constable. And you've got this comfort, that *I'm* off your shoulders for a good bit to come—p'raps this two years—if I don't play; and I don't intend to touch the confounded black and red: and by that time my lady, as you call her—Jimmy, I used to say—will have come round again; and you'll be ready for me, you know, and come down handsomely to yours truly."

At this juncture of their conversation Strong returned, nor did the Baronet care much about prolonging the talk, having got the money; and he made his way from Shepherd's Inn, and went home and bullied his servant in a manner so unusually brisk and insolent, that the man concluded his master must have pawned some more of the house furniture, or, at any rate, have come into possession of some ready money.

"And yet I've looked over the house, Morgan, and I don't think he has took any more of the things," Sir Francis's valet said to Major Pendennis's man, as they met at their Club soon after. "My lady locked up a'most all the bejewtary afore she went away, and he couldn't take away the picters and looking-glasses in a

cab: and he wouldn't spout the fenders and fire-irons—he ain't so bad as that. But he's got money somehow. He's so dam'd imperent when he have. A few nights ago I sor him at Vauxhall, where I was a polkin' with Lady Hemly Babewood's gals—a wery pleasant room that is, and an uncommon good lot in it, hall except the 'ousekeeper, and she's methodisticle—I was a polkin'—you're too old a cove to polk, Mr. Morgan—and 'ere's your 'ealth—and I 'appened to 'ave on some of Claver-ing's 'abberdashery, and he sor it too: and he didn't dare so much as speak a word."

"How about the house in St. John's Wood?" Mr. Morgan asked.

"Execution in it.—Sold up hevery thing: ponies, and pianna, and brougham, and all. Mrs. Montague Rivers hoff to Boulogne,—non est inwentus, Mr. Morgan. It's my belief she put the execution in herself: and was tired of him."

"Play much?" asked Morgan.

"Not since the smash. When your Governor, and the lawyers, and my lady and him had that tremendous scene: he went down on his knees, my lady told Mrs. Bonner, as told me,—and swoar as he never more would touch a card or a dice, or put his name to a bit of paper; and my lady was a goin' to give him the notes down to pay his liabilities after the race: only your Governor said, (which he wrote it on a piece of paper, and passed it across the table to the lawyer and my lady,) that some one else had better book up for him, for he'd have kep' some of the money. He's a sly old cove, your Gov'nor."

The expression of "old cove," thus flippantly applied by the younger gentleman to himself and his master, dis-pleased Mr. Morgan exceedingly. On the first occasion,

when Mr. Lightfoot used the obnoxious expression, his comrade's anger was only indicated by a silent frown; but on the second offence, Morgan, who was smoking his cigar elegantly, and holding it on the tip of his penknife, withdrew the cigar from his lips, and took his young friend to task.

"Don't call Major Pendennis an old cove, if you'll 'ave the goodness, Lightfoot, and don't call *me* an old cove, ne'ther. Such words ain't used in society; and we have lived in the fust society, both at 'ome and foring. We've been intimate with the fust statesmen of Europe. When we go abroad we dine with Prince Metternich and Louy Philup reg'lar. We go here to the best houses, the tip-tops, I tell you. We ride with Lord John and the noble Whycount at the 'ead of Foring Affairs. We dine with the Hearl of Burgrave, and are consulted by the Marquis of Steyne in everythink. We *ought* to know a thing or two, Mr. Lightfoot. You're a young man; I'm an old cove, as you say. We've both seen the world, and we both know that it ain't money, nor bein' a Baronet, nor 'avin' a town and country 'ouse, nor a paltry five or six thousand a year."

"It's ten, Mr. Morgan," cried Mr. Lightfoot, with great animation.

"It *may* have been, sir," Morgan said, with calm severity; "it may have been, Mr. Lightfoot, but it ain't six now, nor five, sir. It's been doosedly dipped and cut into, sir, by the confounded extravygance of your master, with his helbow shakin', and his bill discountin', and his cottage in the Regency Park, and his many wickednesses. He's a bad un, Mr. Lightfoot,—a bad lot, sir, and that you know. And it ain't money, sir,—not such money as that, at any rate, come from a Cal-

cuttar attorney, and I dussay wrung out of the pore starving blacks—that will give a pusson position in society, as you know very well. We've no money, but we go everywhere; there's not a housekeeper's room, sir, in this town of any consiquince, where James Morgan ain't welcome. And it was me who got you into this Club, Lightfoot, as you very well know, though I am an old cove, and they would have black-balled you without me as sure as your name is Frederic."

"I know they would, Mr. Morgan," said the other, with much humility.

"Well, then, don't call me an old cove, sir. It ain't gentlemanlike, Frederic Lightfoot, which I knew you when you was a cab-boy, and when your father was in trouble, and got you the place you have now when the Frenchman went away. And if you think, sir, that because you're making up to Mrs. Bonner, who may have saved her two thousand pound—and I daresay she has in five-and-twenty years, as she have lived confidential maid to Lady Clavering—yet, sir, you must remember who put you into that service, and who knows what you were before, sir, and it don't become you, Frederic Lightfoot, to call me an old cove."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Morgan—I can't do more than make an apology—will you have a glass, sir, and let me drink your 'ealth?"

"You know I don't take sperrits, Lightfoot," replied Morgan, appeased. "And so you and Mrs. Bonner is going to put up together, are you?"

"She's old, but two thousand pound's a good bit, you see, Mr. Morgan. And we'll get the 'Clavering Arms' for a very little; and that'll be no bad thing when the

railroad runs through Clavering. And when we are there, I hope you'll come and see us, Mr. Morgan."

"It's a stoopid place, and so society," said Mr. Morgan. "I know it well. In Mrs. Pendennis's time we used to go down reg'lar, and the hair refreshed me after the London racket."

"The railroad will improve Mr. Arthur's property," remarked Lightfoot. "What's about the figure of it, should you say, sir?"

"Under fifteen hundred, sir," answered Morgan; at which the other, who knew the extent of poor Arthur's acres, thrust his tongue in his cheek, but remained wisely silent.

"Is his man any good, Mr. Morgan?" Lightfoot resumed.

"Pidgeon ain't used to society as yet; but he's young and has good talents, and has read a good deal, and I dessay he will do very well," replied Morgan. "He wouldn't quite do for *this* kind of thing, Lightfoot, for he ain't seen the world yet."

When the pint of sherry for which Mr. Lightfoot called, upon Mr. Morgan's announcement that he declined to drink spirits, had been discussed by the two gentlemen, who held the wine up to the light, and smacked their lips, and winked their eyes at it, and rallied the landlord as to the vintage, in the most approved manner of connoisseurs, Morgan's ruffled equanimity was quite restored, and he was prepared to treat his young friend with perfect good-humour.

"What d'you think about Miss Amory, Lightfoot—tell us in confidence, now—Do you think we should do well—you understand—if we make Miss A. into Mrs. A. P., *comprendy vous?*"

"She and her ma's always quarrellin'," said Mr. Lightfoot. "Bonner is more than a match for the old lady, and treats Sir Francis like—like this year spill, which I fling into the grate. But she daren't say a word to Miss Amory. No more dare none of us. When a visitor comes in, she smiles and languishes, you'd think that butter wouldn't melt in her mouth: and the minute he is gone, very likely, she flares up like a little demon, and says things fit to send you wild. If Mr. Arthur comes, it's 'Do let's sing that there delightful song!' or, 'Come and write me them pooty verses in this halbum!' and very likely she's been a rilin' her mother, or sticking pins into her maid, a minute before. She do stick pins into her and pinch her. Mary Hann showed me one of her arms quite black and blue; and I recklect Mrs. Bonner, who's as jealous of me as a old cat, boxed her ears for showing me. And then you should see Miss at luncheon, when there's nobody but the family. She makes b'leave she never heats, and my! you should only jest see her. She has Mary Hann to bring her up plum-cakes and creams into her bed-room; and the cook's the only man in the house she's civil to. Bonner says, how, the second season in London, Mr. Soppington was a goin' to propose for her, and actially came one day, and sor her fling a book into the fire, and scold her mother so, that he went down softly by the back droring-room door, which he came in by; and next thing we heard of him was, he was married to Miss Rider. Oh, she's a devil, that little Blanche, and that's my candig apinium, Mr. Morgan."

"Apinion, not apinium, Lightfoot, my good fellow," Mr. Morgan said, with parental kindness; and then asked of his own bosom, with a sigh, why the deuce does

my Governor want Master Arthur to marry such a girl as this? And the *tête-à-tête* of the two gentlemen was broken up by the entry of other gentlemen, members of the Club—when fashionable town-talk, politics, cribbage, and other amusements ensued, and the conversation became general.

The Gentleman's Club was held in the parlour of the "Wheel of Fortune" public-house, in a snug little by-lane, leading out of one of the great streets of May Fair, and frequented by some of the most select gentlemen about town. Their masters' affairs, debts, intrigues, adventures; their ladies' good and bad qualities and quarrels with their husbands; all the family secrets were here discussed with perfect freedom and confidence: and here, when about to enter into a new situation, a gentleman was enabled to get every requisite information regarding the family of which he proposed to become a member. Liveries, it may be imagined, were excluded from this select precinct; and the powdered heads of the largest metropolitan footmen might bow down in vain entreating admission into the Gentleman's Club. These outcast giants in plush took their beer in an outer apartment of the "Wheel of Fortune," and could no more get an entry into the Club room than a Pall Mall tradesman or a Lincoln's Inn attorney could get admission into Bays's or Spratt's. And it is because the conversation which we have been permitted to overhear, in some measure explains the characters and bearings of our story, that we have ventured to introduce the reader into a society so exclusive.

CHAPTER LXI

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

A SHORT time after the piece of good fortune which befel Colonel Altamont at Epsom, that gentleman put into execution his projected foreign tour, and the chronicler of the polite world who goes down to London Bridge for the purpose of taking leave of the people of fashion who quit this country, announced that among the company on board the Soho to Antwerp last Saturday, were " Sir Robert, Lady, and the Misses Hodge; Mr. Serjeant Kewsy, and Mrs. and Miss Kewsy; Colonel Altamont, Major Coddy," &c. The Colonel travelled in state, and as became a gentleman: he appeared in a rich travelling costume; he drank brandy-and-water freely during the passage, and was not sick, as some of the other passengers were; and he was attended by his body servant, the faithful Irish legionary who had been for some time in waiting upon himself and Captain Strong in their chambers of Shepherd's Inn.

The Chevalier partook of a copious dinner at Blackwall with his departing friend the Colonel, and one or

two others, who drank many healths to Altamont at that liberal gentleman's expense. "Strong, old boy," the Chevalier's worthy chum said, "if you want a little money, now's your time. I'm your man. You're a good feller, and have been a good feller to me, and a twenty-pound note more or less will make no odds to me." But Strong said, No, he didn't want any money; he was flush, quite flush—"that is, not flush enough to pay you back your last loan, Altamont, but quite able to carry on for some time to come"—and so, with a not uncordial greeting between them, the two parted. Had the possession of money really made Altamont more honest and amiable than he had hitherto been, or only caused him to seem more amiable in Strong's eyes? Perhaps he really was better; and money improved him. Perhaps it was the beauty of wealth Strong saw and respected. But he argued within himself, "This poor devil, this unlucky outcast of a returned convict, is ten times as good a fellow as my friend Sir Francis Clavering, Bart. He has pluck and honesty in his way. He will stick to a friend, and face an enemy. The other never had courage to do either. And what is it that has put the poor devil under a cloud? He was only a little wild, and signed his father-in-law's name. Many a man has done worse, and come to no wrong, and holds his head up. Clavering does. No, he don't hold his head up: he never did in his best days." And Strong, perhaps, repented him of the falsehood which he had told to the free-handed Colonel, that he was not in want of money; but it was a falsehood on the side of honesty, and the Chevalier could not bring down his stomach to borrow a second time from his outlawed friend. Besides, he could get on. Clavering had promised him some: not that Clav-

ering's promises were much to be believed, but the Chevalier was of a hopeful turn, and trusted in many chances of catching his patron, and waylaying some of those stray remittances and supplies, in the procuring of which for his principal lay Mr. Strong's chief business.

He had grumbled about Altamont's companionship in the Shepherd's Inn chambers; but he found those lodgings more glum now without his partner than with him. The solitary life was not agreeable to his social soul; and he had got into extravagant and luxurious habits, too, having a servant at his command to run his errands, to arrange his toilettes, and to cook his meal. It was rather a grand and touching sight now to see the portly and handsome gentleman painting his own boots, and broiling his own mutton chop. It has been before stated that the Chevalier had a wife, a Spanish lady of Vittoria, who had gone back to her friends, after a few months' union with the Captain, whose head she broke with a dish. He began to think whether he should not go back and see his Juanita. The Chevalier was growing melancholy after the departure of his friend the Colonel; or, to use his own picturesque expression, was "down on his luck." These moments of depression and intervals of ill-fortune occur constantly in the lives of heroes. Marius at Minturnæ, Charles Edward in the Highlands, Napoleon before Elba:—what great man has not been called upon to face evil fortune?

From Clavering no supplies were to be had for some time. The five-and-twenty pounds, or "pony," which the exemplary Baronet had received from Mr. Altamont, had fled out of Clavering's keeping as swiftly as many previous ponies. He had been down the river with a choice party of sporting gents, who dodged the police

and landed in Essex, where they put up Billy Bluck to fight Dick the cabman, whom the Baronet backed, and who had it all his own way for thirteen rounds, when, by

an unlucky blow in the windpipe, Billy killed him. "It's always my luck, Strong," Sir Francis said; "the betting was three to one on the cabman, and I thought myself as sure of thirty pounds, as if I had it in my pocket. And dammy, I owe my man Lightfoot fourteen pound now which he's lent and paid for me: and he duns me—

the confounded impudent blackguard: and I wish to Heaven I knew any way of getting a bill done, or of screwing a little out of my lady! I'll give you half, Ned, upon my soul and honour, I'll give you half if you can get anybody to do us a little fifty."

But Ned said sternly that he had given his word of honour, as a gentleman, that he would be no party to any future bill-transactions in which her husband might engage (who had given his word of honour too), and the Chevalier said that he, at least, would keep his word, and would black his own boots all his life rather than break his promise. And what is more, he vowed he would advise Lady Clavering that Sir Francis was about to break his faith towards her, upon the very first hint which he could get that such was Clavering's intention.

Upon this information Sir Francis Clavering, according to his custom, cried and cursed very volubly. He spoke of death as his only resource. He besought and implored his dear Strong, his best friend, his dear old Ned, not to throw him over: and when he quitted his dearest Ned, as he went down the stairs of Shepherd's Inn, swore and blasphemed at Ned as the most infernal villain, and traitor, and blackguard, and coward under the sun, and wished Ned was in his grave, and in a worse place only he would like the confounded ruffian to live, until Frank Clavering had had his revenge out of him.

In Strong's chambers the Baronet met a gentleman whose visits were now, as it has been shown, very frequent in Shepherd's Inn, Mr. Samuel Huxter, of Clavering. That young fellow, who had poached the walnuts in Clavering Park in his youth, and had seen the Baronet drive through the street at home with four horses, and prance up to church with powdered footmen, had an im-

mense respect for his Member, and a prodigious delight in making his acquaintance. He introduced himself, with much blushing and trepidation, as a Clavering man —son of Mr. Huxter, of the market-place—father attended Sir Francis's keeper, Coxwood, when his gun burst and took off three fingers—proud to make Sir Francis's acquaintance. All of which introduction Sir Francis received affably. And honest Huxter talked about Sir Francis to the chaps at Bartholomew's; and told Fanny, in the lodge, that, after all, there was nothing like a thorough-bred un, a regular good old English gentleman, one of the olden time! To which Fanny replied, that she thought Sir Francis was an ojous creature—she didn't know why—but she couldn't abear him—she was sure he was wicked, and low, and mean—she knew he was; and when Sam to this replied that Sir Francis was very affable, and had borrowed half a sov' of him quite kindly, Fanny burst into a laugh, pulled Sam's long hair (which was not yet of irreproachable cleanliness), patted his chin, and called him a stoopid, stoopid, old foolish stoopid, and said that Sir Francis was always borrering money of everybody, and that Mar had actially refused him twice, and had had to wait three months to get seven shillings which he had borrered of 'er.

"Don't say 'er but her, borrer but borrow, actially but actually, Fanny," Mr. Huxter replied—not to a fault in her argument, but to grammatical errors in her statement.

"Well then, her, and borrow, and hactually—there then, you stoopid," said the other; and the scholar made such a pretty face that the grammar-master was quickly appeased, and would have willingly given her a hundred

more lessons on the spot, at the price which he took for that one.

Of course Mrs. Bolton was by, and I suppose that Fanny and Mr. Sam were on exceedingly familiar and confidential terms by this time, and that time had brought to the former certain consolations, and soothed certain regrets, which are deucedly bitter when they occur, but which are, no more than tooth-pulling, or any other pang, eternal.

As you sit, surrounded by respect and affection; happy, honoured, and flattered in your old age; your foibles gently indulged; your least words kindly cherished; your garrulous old stories received for the hundredth time with dutiful forbearance, and never-failing hypocritical smiles; the women of your house constant in their flatteries; the young men hushed and attentive when you begin to speak; the servants awe-stricken; the tenants cap in hand, and ready to act in the place of your worship's horses when your honour takes a drive —it has often struck you, O thoughtful Dives! that this respect, and these glories, are for the main part transferred, with your fee simple, to your successor—that the servants will bow, and the tenants shout, for your son as for you; that the butler will fetch him the wine (improved by a little keeping) that's now in your cellar; and that, when your night is come, and the light of your life is gone down, as sure as the morning rises after you and without you, the sun of prosperity and flattery shines on your heir. Men come and bask in the halo of consols and acres that beams round about him: the reverence is transferred with the estate; of which, with all its advantages, pleasures, respect, and good-will, he in

Mr. Huxter likes to
be called a Goose

turn becomes the life-tenant. How long do you wish or expect that your people will regret you? How much time does a man devote to grief before he begins to enjoy? A great man must keep his heir at his feast like a living *memento mori*. If he holds very much by life, the presence of the other must be a constant sting and warning. "Make ready to go," says the successor to your honour; "I am waiting: and I could hold it as well as you."

What has this reference to the possible reader, to do with any of the characters of this history? Do we wish to apologise for Pen because he has got a white hat, and because his mourning for his mother is fainter? All the lapse of years, all the career of fortune, all the events of life, however strongly they may move or eagerly excite him, never can remove that sainted image from his heart, or banish that blessed love from its sanctuary. If he yields to wrong, the dear eyes will look sadly upon him when he dares to meet them; if he does well, endures pain, or conquers temptation, the ever-present love will greet him, he knows, with approval and pity; if he falls, plead for him; if he suffers, cheer him;—be with him and accompany him always until death is past, and sorrow and sin are no more. Is this mere dreaming, or, on the part of an idle story-teller, useless moralising? May not the man of the world take his moment, too, to be grave and thoughtful? Ask of your own hearts and memories, brother and sister, if we do not live in the dead; and (to speak reverently) prove God by love?

Of these matters Pen and Warrington often spoke in many a solemn and friendly converse in after days; and Pendennis's mother was worshipped in his memory, and canonised there, as such a saint ought to be. Lucky he

in life who knows a few such women! A kind provision of Heaven it was that sent us such; and gave us to admire that touching and wonderful spectacle of innocence, and love, and beauty.

But as it is certain that if, in the course of these sentimental conversations, any outer stranger, Major Pendennis for instance, had walked into Pen's chambers, Arthur and Warrington would have stopped their talk, and chosen another subject, and discoursed about the Opera, or the last debate in Parliament, or Miss Jones's marriage with Captain Smith, or what not,—so, let us imagine that the public steps in at this juncture, and stops the confidential talk between author and reader, and begs us to resume our remarks about this world, with which both are certainly better acquainted than with that other one into which we have just been peeping.

On coming into his property, Arthur Pendennis at first comported himself with a modesty and equanimity which obtained his friend Warrington's praises, though Arthur's uncle was a little inclined to quarrel with his nephew's meanness of spirit, for not assuming greater state and pretensions now that he had entered on the enjoyment of his kingdom. He would have had Arthur installed in handsome quarters, and riding on showy park hacks, or in well-built cabriolets, every day. "I am too absent," Arthur said with a laugh, "to drive a cab in London; the omnibuses would cut me in two, or I should send my horse's head into the ladies' carriage windows; and you wouldn't have me driven about by my servant like an apothecary, uncle?" No, Major Pendennis would on no account have his nephew appear like an apothecary; the august representative of the

house of Pendennis must not so demean himself. And when Arthur, pursuing his banter, said, "And yet, I dare say, sir, my father was proud enough when he first set up his gig," the old Major hemmed and ha'd, and his wrinkled face reddened with a blush as he answered, "You know what Buonaparte said, sir, '*Il faut laver son linge sale en famille.*' There is no need, sir, for you to brag that your father was a—a medical man. He came of a most ancient but fallen house, and was obliged to reconstruct the family fortunes, as many a man of good family has done before him. You are like the fellow in Sterne, sir—the Marquis who came to demand his sword again. Your father got back yours for you. You are a man of landed estate, by Gad, sir, and a gentleman —never forget you are a gentleman."

Then Arthur slily turned on his uncle the argument which he had heard the old gentleman often use regarding himself. "In the society which I have the honour of frequenting through your introduction, who cares to ask about my paltry means or my humble gentility, uncle?" he asked. "It would be absurd of me to attempt to compete with the great folks; and all that they can ask from us is, that we should have a decent address and good manners."

"But for all that, sir, I should belong to a better Club or two," the uncle answered: "I should give an occasional dinner, and select my society well; and I should come out of that horrible garret in the Temple, sir." And so Arthur compromised, by descending to the second floor in Lamb Court: Warrington still occupying his old quarters, and the two friends being determined not to part one from the other. Cultivate kindly, reader, those friendships of your youth: it is only in that gen-

erous time that they are formed. How different the intimacies of after days are, and how much weaker the grasp of your own hand after it has been shaken about in twenty years' commerce with the world, and has squeezed and dropped a thousand equally careless palms! As you can seldom fashion your tongue to speak a new language after twenty, the heart refuses to receive friendship pretty soon: it gets too hard to yield to the impression.

So Pen had many acquaintances, and being of a jovial and easy turn, got more daily: but no friend like Warrington; and the two men continued to live almost as much in common as the Knights of the Temple, riding upon one horse (for Pen's was at Warrington's service), and having their chambers and their servitor in common.

Mr. Warrington had made the acquaintance of Pen's friends of Grosvenor Place during their last unlucky season in London, and had expressed himself no better satisfied with Sir Francis and Lady Clavering and her ladyship's daughter than was the public in general. "The world is right," George said, "about those people. The young men laugh and talk freely before those ladies, and about them. The girl sees people whom she has no right to know, and talks to men with whom no girl should have an intimacy. Did you see those two reprobates leaning over Lady Clavering's carriage in the Park the other day, and leering under Miss Blanche's bonnet? No good mother would let her daughter know those men, or admit them within her doors."

"The Begum is the most innocent and good-natured soul alive," interposed Pen. "She never heard any harm of Captain Blackball, or read that trial in which Charley Lovelace figures. Do you suppose that honest

ladies read and remember the Chronique Scandaleuse as well as you, you old grumbler?"

"Would you like Laura Bell to know those fellows?" Warrington asked, his face turning rather red. "Would you let any woman you loved be contaminated by their company? I have no doubt that the poor Begum is ignorant of their histories. It seems to me she is ignorant of a great number of better things. It seems to me that your honest Begum is not a lady, Pen. It is not her fault, doubtless, that she has not had the education or learned the refinements of a lady."

"She is as moral as Lady Portsea, who has all the world at her balls, and as refined as Mrs. Bull, who breaks the king's English, and has half-a-dozen dukes at her table," Pen answered, rather sulkily. "Why should you and I be more squeamish than the rest of the world? Why are we to visit the sins of her fathers on this harmless kind creature? She never did anything but kindness to you or any mortal soul. As far as she knows, she does her best. She does not set up to be more than she is. She gives you the best dinners she can buy, and the best company she can get. She pays the debts of that scamp of a husband of hers. She spoils her boy like the most virtuous mother in England. Her opinion about literary matters, to be sure, is not worth much; and I daresay she never read a line of Wordsworth, or heard of Tennyson in her life."

"No more has Mrs. Flanagan the laundress," growled out Pen's Mentor; "no more has Betty the housemaid; and I have no word of blame against them. But a high-souled man doesn't make friends of these. A gentleman doesn't choose these for his companions, or bitterly rues it afterwards if he do. Are you, who are setting up

to be a man of the world and a philosopher, to tell me that the aim of life is to guttle three courses and dine off silver? Do you dare to own to yourself that your ambition in life is good claret, and that you'll dine with any, provided you get a stalled ox to feed on? You call me a Cynic—why, what a monstrous Cynicism it is, which you and the rest of you men of the world admit. I'd rather live upon raw turnips and sleep in a hollow tree, or turn backwoodsman or savage, than degrade myself to this civilisation, and own that a French cook was the thing in life best worth living for."

"Because you like a raw beef-steak and a pipe afterwards," broke out Pen, "you give yourself airs of superiority over people whose tastes are more dainty, and are not ashamed of the world they live in. Who goes about professing particular admiration, or esteem, or friendship, or gratitude even, for the people one meets every day? If A. asks me to his house, and gives me his best, I take his good things for what they are worth and no more. I do not profess to pay him back in friendship, but in the conventional money of society. When we part, we part without any grief. When we meet, we are tolerably glad to see one another. If I were only to live with my friends, your black muzzle, old George, is the only face I should see."

"You are your uncle's pupil," said Warrington, rather sadly; "and you speak like a worldling."

"And why not?" asked Pendennis; "why not acknowledge the world I stand upon, and submit to the conditions of the society which we live in and live by? I am older than you, George, in spite of your grizzled whiskers, and have seen much more of the world than you have in your garret here, shut up with your books

and your reveries and your ideas of one-and-twenty. I say, I take the world as it is, and being of it, will not be ashamed of it. If the time is out of joint, have I any calling or strength to set it right?"

"Indeed, I don't think you have much of either," growled Pen's interlocutor.

"If I doubt whether I am better than my neighbour," Arthur continued,—"if I concede that I am no better,—I also doubt whether he is better than I. I see men who begin with ideas of universal reform, and who, before their beards are grown, propound their loud plans for the regeneration of mankind, give up their schemes after a few years of bootless talking and vainglorious attempts to lead their fellows; and after they have found that men will no longer hear them, as indeed they never were in the least worthy to be heard, sink quietly into the rank and file,—acknowledging their aims impracticable, or thankful that they were never put into practice. The fiercest reformers grow calm, and are fain to put up with things as they are: the loudest Radical orators become dumb, quiescent placemen: the most fervent Liberals, when out of power, become humdrum Conservatives, or downright tyrants or despots in office. Look at Thiers, look at Guizot, in opposition and in place! Look at the Whigs appealing to the country, and the Whigs in power! Would you say that the conduct of these men is an act of treason, as the Radicals bawl,—who would give way in their turn, were their turn ever to come? No, only that they submit to circumstances which are stronger than they,—march as the world marches towards reform, but at the world's pace, (and the movements of the vast body of mankind must needs be slow,)—forego this scheme as impracticable, on ac-

count of opposition,—that as immature, because against the sense of the majority,—are forced to calculate drawbacks and difficulties, as well as to think of reforms and advances,—and compelled finally to submit, and to wait, and to compromise."

"The Right Honourable Arthur Pendennis could not speak better, or be more satisfied with himself, if he was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer," Warrington said.

"Self-satisfied? Why self-satisfied?" continued Pen. "It seems to me that my scepticism is more respectful and more modest than the revolutionary ardour of other folks. Many a patriot of eighteen, many a Spouting-Club orator, would turn the Bishops out of the House of Lords to-morrow, and throw the Lords out after the Bishops, and throw the throne into the Thames after the Peers and the Bench. Is that man more modest than I, who take these institutions as I find them, and wait for time and truth to develop, or fortify, or (if you like) destroy them? A college tutor, or a nobleman's toady, who appears one fine day as my right reverend lord, in a silk apron and a shovel-hat, and assumes benedictory airs over me, is still the same man we remember at Oxbridge, when he was truckling to the tufts, and bullying the poor undergraduates in the lecture-room. An hereditary legislator, who passes his time with jockeys and black-legs and ballet-girls, and who is called to rule over me and his other betters because his grandfather made a lucky speculation in the funds, or found a coal or tin mine on his property, or because his stupid ancestor happened to be in command of ten thousand men as brave as himself, who overcame twelve thousand Frenchmen, or fifty thousand Indians—such a man, I

say, inspires me with no more respect than the bitterest democrat can feel towards him. But, such as he is, he is a part of the old society to which we belong: and I submit to his lordship with acquiescence; and he takes his place above the best of us at all dinner parties, and there bides his time. I don't want to chop his head off with a guillotine, or to fling mud at him in the streets. When they call such a man a disgrace to his order; and such another, who is good and gentle, refined and generous, who employs his great means in promoting every kindness and charity, and art and grace of life, in the kindest and most gracious manner, an ornament to his rank—the question as to the use and propriety of the order is not in the least affected one way or other. There it is, extant among us, a part of our habits, the creed of many of us, the growth of centuries, the symbol of a most complicated tradition—there stand my lord the bishop and my lord the hereditary legislator—what the French call *transactions* both of them,—representing in their present shape mail-clad barons and double-sworded chiefs, (from whom their lordships the hereditaries, for the most part, *don't* descend,) and priests, professing to hold an absolute truth and a divinely inherited power, the which truth absolute our ancestors burned at the stake, and denied there; the which divine transmissible power still exists in print—to be believed, or not, pretty much at choice; and of these, I say, I acquiesce that they exist, and no more. If you say that these schemes, devised before printing was known, or steam was born; when thought was an infant, scared and whipped; and truth under its guardians was gagged, and swathed, and blindfolded, and not allowed to lift its voice, or to look out, or to walk under the sun; before men were per-

mitted to meet, or to trade, or to speak with each other—if any one says (as some faithful souls do) that these schemes are for ever, and having been changed and modified constantly are to be subject to no farther development or decay, I laugh, and let the man speak. But I would have toleration for these, as I would ask it for my own opinions; and if they are to die, I would rather they had a decent and natural than an abrupt and violent death."

"You would have sacrificed to Jove," Warrington said, "had you lived in the time of the Christian persecutions."

"Perhaps I would," said Pen, with some sadness. "Perhaps I am a coward,—perhaps my faith is unsteady; but this is my own reserve. What I argue here is, that I will not persecute. Make a faith or a dogma absolute, and persecution become a logical consequence; and Dominic burns a Jew, or Calvin an Arian, or Nero a Christian, or Elizabeth or Mary a Papist or Protestant; or their father both or either, according to his humour; and acting without any pangs of remorse—but, on the contrary, with strict notions of duty fulfilled. Make dogma absolute, and to inflict or to suffer death becomes easy and necessary; and Mahomet's soldiers shouting 'Paradise! Paradise!' and dying on the Christian spears, are not more or less praiseworthy than the same men slaughtering a townful of Jews, or cutting off the heads of all prisoners who would not acknowledge that there was but one prophet of God."

"A little while since, young one," Warrington said, who had been listening to his friend's confessions neither without sympathy nor scorn, for his mood led him to indulge in both, "you asked me why I remained out of

the strife of the world, and looked on at the great labour of my neighbour without taking any part in the struggle? Why, what a mere *dilettante* you own yourself to be, in this confession of general scepticism, and what a listless spectator yourself! You are six-and-twenty years old, and as *blasé* as a rake of sixty. You neither hope much, nor care much, nor believe much. You doubt about other men as much as about yourself. Were it made of such *pococuranti* as you, the world would be intolerable; and I had rather live in a wilderness of monkeys, and listen to their chatter, than in a company of men who denied everything."

"Were the world composed of Saint Bernards or Saint Dominics, it would be equally odious," said Pen, "and at the end of a few score years would cease to exist altogether. Would you have every man with his head shaved, and every woman in a cloister,—carrying out to the full the ascetic principle? Would you have conventicle hymns twanging from every lane in every city in the world? Would you have all the birds of the forest sing one note and fly with one feather? You call me a sceptic because I acknowledge what *is;* and in acknowledging that, be it linnet or lark, or priest or parson; be it, I mean, any single one of the infinite varieties of the creatures of God (whose very name I would be understood to pronounce with reverence, and never to approach but with distant awe), I say that the study and acknowledgment of that variety amongst men especially increases our respect and wonder for the Creator, Commander, and Ordainer of all these minds, so different and yet so united,—meeting in a common adoration, and offering up, each according to his degree and means of approaching the Divine centre, his acknow-

ledgment of praise and worship, each singing (to recur to the bird simile) his natural song."

"And so, Arthur, the hymn of a saint, or the ode of a poet, or the chant of a Newgate thief, are all pretty much the same in your philosophy," said George.

"Even that sneer could be answered were it to the point," Pendennis replied; "but it is not; and it could be replied to you, that even to the wretched outcry of the thief on the tree, the wisest and the best of all teachers we know of, the untiring Comforter and Consoler, promised a pitiful hearing and a certain hope. Hymns of saints! Odes of poets! who are we to measure the chances and opportunities, the means of doing, or even judging, right and wrong, awarded to men; and to establish the rule for meting out their punishments and rewards? We are as insolent and unthinking in judging of men's morals as of their intellects. We admire this man as being a great philosopher, and set down the other as a dullard, not knowing either, or the amount of truth in either, or being certain of the truth anywhere. We sing Te Deum for this hero who has won a battle, and De Profundis for that other one who has broken out of prison, and has been caught afterwards by the policemen. Our measure of rewards and punishments is most partial and incomplete, absurdly inadequate, utterly worldly, and we wish to continue it into the next world. Into that next and awful world we strive to pursue men, and send after them our impotent party verdicts of condemnation or acquittal. We set up our paltry little rods to measure Heaven immeasurable, as if, in comparison to that, Newton's mind, or Pascal's, or Shakspeare's, was any loftier than mine; as if the ray which travels from the sun would reach me sooner than the man who blacks

my boots. Measured by that altitude, the tallest and the smallest among us are so alike diminutive and pitifully base, that I say we should take no count of the calculation, and it is a meanness to reckon the difference."

"Your figure fails there, Arthur," said the other, better pleased; "if even by common arithmetic we can multiply as we can reduce almost infinitely, the Great Reckoner must take count of all; and the small is not small, or the great great, to his infinity."

"I don't call those calculations in question," Arthur said; "I only say that yours are incomplete and premature; false in consequence, and, by every operation, multiplying into wider error. I do not condemn the men who killed Socrates and damned Galileo. I say that they damned Galileo and killed Socrates."

"And yet but a moment since you admitted the propriety of acquiescence in the present, and, I suppose, all other tyrannies?"

"No: but that if an opponent menaces me, of whom and without cost of blood and violence I can get rid, I would rather wait him out, and starve him out, than fight him out. Fabius fought Hannibal sceptically. Who was his Roman coadjutor, whom we read of in Plutarch when we were boys, who scoffed at the other's procrastination and doubted his courage, and engaged the enemy and was beaten for his pains?"

In these speculations and confessions of Arthur, the reader may perhaps see allusions to questions which, no doubt, have occupied and discomposed himself, and which he may have answered by very different solutions to those come to by our friend. We are not pledging ourselves for the correctness of his opinions, which read-

ers will please to consider are delivered dramatically, the writer being no more answerable for them than for the sentiments uttered by any other character of the story: our endeavour is merely to follow out, in its progress, the development of the mind of a worldly and selfish, but not ungenerous or unkind or truth-avoiding man. And it will be seen that the lamentable stage to which his logic at present has brought him, is one of general scepticism and sneering acquiescence in the world as it is; or if you like so to call it, a belief qualified with scorn in all things extant. The tastes and habits of such a man prevent him from being a boisterous demagogue, and his love of truth and dislike of cant keep him from advancing crude propositions, such as many loud reformers are constantly ready with; much more of uttering downright falsehoods in arguing questions or abusing opponents, which he would die or starve rather than use. It was not in our friend's nature to be able to utter certain lies; nor was he strong enough to protest against others, except with a polite sneer; his maxim being, that he owed obedience to all Acts of Parliament, as long as they were not repealed.

And to what does this easy and sceptical life lead a man? Friend Arthur was a Sadducee, and the Baptist might be in the Wilderness shouting to the poor, who were listening with all their might and faith to the preacher's awful accents and denunciations of wrath or woe or salvation; and our friend the Sadducee would turn his sleek mule with a shrug and a smile from the crowd, and go home to the shade of his terrace, and muse over preacher and audience, and turn to his roll of Plato, or his pleasant Greek song-book babbling of honey and Hybla, and nymphs and fountains and love. To what,

we say, does this scepticism lead? It leads a man to a shameful loneliness and selfishness, so to speak—the more shameful, because it is so good-humoured and conscienceless and serene. Conscience! What is conscience? Why accept remorse? What is public or private faith? Mythuses alike enveloped in enormous tradition. If seeing and acknowledging the lies of the world, Arthur, as see them you can with only too fatal a clearness, you submit to them without any protest farther than a laugh: if, plunged yourself in easy sensuality, you allow the whole wretched world to pass groaning by you unmoved: if the fight for the truth is taking place, and all men of honour are on the ground armed on the one side or the other, and you alone are to lie on your balcony and smoke your pipe out of the noise and the danger, you had better have died, or never have been at all, than such a sensual coward.

"The truth, friend!" Arthur said, imperturbably; "where is the truth? Show it me. That is the question between us. I see it on both sides. I see it on the Conservative side of the House, and amongst the Radicals, and even on the ministerial benches. I see it in this man who worships by Act of Parliament, and is rewarded with a silk apron and five thousand a year; in that man, who, driven fatally by the remorseless logic of his creed, gives up everything, friends, fame, dearest ties, closest vanities, the respect of an army of churchmen, the recognised position of a leader, and passes over, truth-impelled, to the enemy, in whose ranks he is ready to serve henceforth as a nameless private soldier:—I see the truth in that man, as I do in his brother, whose logic drives him to quite a different conclusion, and who, after having passed a life in vain endeavours to reconcile an irrecon-

cilable book, flings it at last down in despair, and declares, with tearful eyes, and hands up to Heaven, his revolt and recantation. If the truth is with all these, why should I take side with any one of them? Some are called upon to preach: let them preach. Of these preachers there are somewhat too many, methinks, who fancy they have the gift. But we cannot all be parsons in church, that is clear. Some must sit silent and listen, or go to sleep mayhap. Have we not all our duties? The head charity-boy blows the bellows; the master canes the other boys in the organ-loft; the clerk sings out Amen from the desk; and the beadle with the staff opens the door for his Reverence, who rustles in silk up to the cushion. I won't cane the boys, nay, or say Amen always, or act as the church's champion or warrior, in the shape of the beadle with the staff; but I will take off my hat in the place, and say my prayers there too, and shake hands with the clergyman as he steps on the grass outside. Don't I know that his being there is a compromise, and that he stands before me an Act of Parliament? That the church he occupies was built for other worship? That the Methodist chapel is next door; and that Bunyan the tinker is bawling out the tidings of damnation on the common hard by? Yes, I am a Sadducee; and I take things as I find them, and the world, and the Acts of Parliament of the world, as they are; and as I intend to take a wife, if I find one—not to be madly in love and prostrate at her feet like a fool —not to worship her as an angel, or to expect to find her as such—but to be good-natured to her, and courteous, expecting good-nature and pleasant society from her in turn. And so, George, if ever you hear of my marrying, depend on it, it won't be a romantic attach-

ment on my side: and if you hear of any good place under Government, I have no particular scruples that I know of, which would prevent me from accepting your offer."

"O Pen, you scoundrel! I know what you mean," here Warrington broke out. "This is the meaning of your scepticism, of your quietism, of your atheism, my poor fellow. You're going to sell yourself, and Heaven help you! You are going to make a bargain which will degrade you and make you miserable for life, and there's no use talking of it. If you are once bent on it, the devil won't prevent you."

"On the contrary, he's on my side, isn't he, George?" said Pen with a laugh. "What good cigars these are! Come down and have a little dinner at the Club; the *chef's* in town, and he'll cook a good one for me. No, you won't? Don't be sulky, old boy, I'm going down to—to the country to-morrow."

CHAPTER LXII

WHICH ACCOUNTS PERHAPS FOR CHAPTER LXI

THE information regarding the affairs of the Clavering family, which Major Pendennis had acquired through Strong, and by his own personal interference as the friend of the house, was such as almost made the old gentleman pause in any plans which he might have once entertained for his nephew's benefit. To bestow upon Arthur a wife with two such fathers-in-law, as the two worthies whom the guileless and unfortunate Lady Clavering had drawn in her marriage ventures, was to benefit no man. And though the one, in a manner, neutralised the other, and the appearance of Amory or Altamont in public would be the signal for his instantaneous withdrawal and condign punishment—for the fugitive convict had cut down the officer in charge of him, and a rope would be inevitably his end, if he came again under British authorities; yet no guardian would like to secure for his ward a wife whose parent was to be got rid of in such a way; and the old gentleman's notion always had been that Altamont, with the gallows before his eyes, would assuredly

avoid recognition; while, at the same time, by holding the threat of his discovery over Clavering, the latter, who would lose everything by Amory's appearance, would be a slave in the hands of the person who knew so fatal a secret.

But if the Begum paid Clavering's debts many times more, her wealth would be expended altogether upon this irreclaimable reprobate; and her heirs, whoever they might be, would succeed but to an emptied treasury; and Miss Amory, instead of bringing her husband a good income and a seat in Parliament, would bring to that individual her person only, and her pedigree with that lamentable note of *sus. per coll.* at the name of the last male of her line.

There was, however, to the old schemer revolving these things in his mind, another course yet open; the which will appear to the reader who may take the trouble to peruse a conversation, which presently ensued, between Major Pendennis and the honourable Baronet the member for Clavering.

When a man, under pecuniary difficulties, disappears from among his usual friends and equals,—dives out of sight, as it were, from the flock of birds in which he is accustomed to sail, it is wonderful at what strange and distant nooks he comes up again for breath. I have known a Pall Mall lounger and Rotten Row buck, of no inconsiderable fashion, vanish from amongst his comrades of the Clubs and the Park, and be discovered, very happy and affable, at an eighteenpenny ordinary in Billingsgate: another gentleman, of great learning and wit, when out-running the constable (were I to say he was a literary man, some critics would vow that I intended to insult the literary profession), once sent me his address

at a little public-house called the "Fox under the Hill," down a most darksome and cavernous archway in the Strand. Such a man, under such misfortunes, may have a house, but he is never in his house; and has an address where letters may be left; but only simpletons go with the hopes of seeing him. Only a few of the faithful know where he is to be found, and have the clue to his hiding-place. So, after the disputes with his wife, and the misfortunes consequent thereon, to find Sir Francis Clavering at home was impossible. "Ever since I hast him for my book, which is fourteen pound, he don't come home till three o'clock, and purtends to be asleep when I bring his water of a mornin', and dodges hout when I'm down stairs," Mr. Lightfoot remarked to his friend Morgan; and announced that he should go down to my Lady, and be butler there, and marry his old woman. In like manner, after his altercations with Strong, the Baronet did not come near him, and fled to other haunts, out of the reach of the Chevalier's reproaches;—out of the reach of conscience, if possible, which many of us try to dodge and leave behind us by changes of scene and other fugitive stratagems.

So, though the elder Pendennis, having his own ulterior object, was bent upon seeing Pen's country neighbour and representative in Parliament, it took the Major no inconsiderable trouble and time before he could get him into such a confidential state and conversation, as were necessary for the ends which the Major had in view. For since the Major had been called in as family friend, and had cognisance of Clavering's affairs, conjugal and pecuniary, the Baronet avoided him: as he always avoided all his lawyers, and agents, when there was an account to be rendered, or an affair of business

to be discussed between them; and never kept any appointment but when its object was the raising of money. Thus, previous to catching this most shy and timorous bird, the Major made more than one futile attempt to hold him;—on one day it was a most innocent-looking invitation to dinner at Greenwich, to meet a few friends; the Baronet accepted, suspected something, and did not come; leaving the Major (who indeed proposed to represent in himself the body of friends) to eat his whitebait alone:—on another occasion the Major wrote and asked for ten minutes' talk, and the Baronet instantly acknowledged the note, and made the appointment at four o'clock the next day at Bays's *precisely* (he carefully underlined the "precisely"); but though four o'clock came, as in the course of time and destiny it could not do otherwise, no Clavering made his appearance. Indeed, if he had borrowed twenty pounds of Pendennis, he could not have been more timid, or desirous of avoiding the Major; and the latter found that it was one thing to seek a man, and another to find him.

Before the close of that day in which Strong's patron had given the Chevalier the benefit of so many blessings before his face and curses behind his back, Sir Francis Clavering, who had pledged his word and his oath to his wife's advisers to draw or accept no more bills of exchange, and to be content with the allowance which his victimised wife still awarded him, had managed to sign his respectable name to a piece of stamped paper, which the Baronet's friend, Mr. Moss Abrams, had carried off, promising to have the bill "done" by a party with whose intimacy Mr. Abrams was favoured. And it chanced that Strong heard of this transaction at the place where

the writings had been drawn,—in the back parlour, namely, of Mr. Santiago's cigar-shop, where the Chevalier was constantly in the habit of spending an hour in the evening.

"He is at his old work again," Mr. Santiago told his customer. "He and Moss Abrams were in my parlour. Moss sent out my boy for a stamp. It must have been a bill for fifty pound. I heard the Baronet tell Moss to date it two months back. He will pretend that it is an old bill, and that he forgot it when he came to a settlement with his wife the other day. I dare say they will give him some more money now he is clear." A man who has the habit of putting his unlucky name to "promises to pay" at six months, has the satisfaction of knowing, too, that his affairs are known and canvassed, and his signature handed round, among the very worst knaves and rogues of London.

Mr. Santiago's shop was close by St. James's Street and Bury Street, where we have had the honour of visiting our friend Major Pendennis in his lodgings. The Major was walking daintily towards his apartment, as Strong, burning with wrath and redolent of Havanna, strode along the same pavement opposite to him.

"Confound these young men: how they poison everything with their smoke," thought the Major. "Here comes a fellow with moustachios and a cigar. Every fellow who smokes and wears moustachios is a low fellow. Oh! it's Mr. Strong.—I hope you are well, Mr. Strong?" and the old gentleman, making a dignified bow to the Chevalier, was about to pass into his house; directing towards the lock of the door, with trembling hand, the polished door-key.

We have said, that, at the long and weary disputes and

conferences regarding the payment of Sir Francis Clavering's last debts, Strong and Pendennis had both been present as friends and advisers of the Baronet's unlucky family. Strong stopped and held out his hand to his brother negotiator, and old Pendennis put out towards him a couple of ungracious fingers.

"What is your good news?" said Major Pendennis, patronising the other still farther, and condescending to address to him an observation, for old Pendennis had kept such good company all his life, that he vaguely imagined he honoured common men by speaking to them. "Still in town, Mr. Strong? I hope I see you well."

"My news is bad news, sir," Strong answered; "it concerns our friends at Tunbridge Wells, and I should like to talk to you about it. Clavering is at his old tricks again, Major Pendennis."

"Indeed! Pray do me the favour to come into my lodging," cried the Major with awakened interest; and the pair entered and took possession of his drawing-room. Here seated, Strong unburthened himself of his indignation to the Major, and spoke at large of Clavering's recklessness and treachery. "No promises will bind him, sir," he said. "You remember when we met, sir, with my lady's lawyer, how he wouldn't be satisfied with giving his honour, but wanted to take his oath on his knees to his wife, and rang the bell for a Bible, and swore perdition on his soul if he ever would give another bill. He has been signing one this very day, sir: and will sign as many more as you please for ready money: he will deceive anybody, his wife or his child, or his old friend, who has backed him a hundred times. Why, there's a bill of his and mine will be due next week—"

"I thought we had paid all—"

"Not that one," Strong said, blushing. "He asked me not to mention it, and—and—I had half the money for that, Major. And they will be down on me. But I don't care for it: I'm used to it. It's Lady Clavering that riles me. It's a shame that that good-natured woman, who has paid him out of gaol a score of times, should be ruined by his heartlessness. A parcel of bill-stealers, boxers, any rascals, get his money; and he don't scruple to throw an honest fellow over. Would you believe it, sir, he took money of Altamont—you know whom I mean?"

"Indeed? of that singular man, who I think came tipsy once to Sir Francis's house?" Major Pendennis said, with impenetrable countenance. "Who *is* Altamont, Mr. Strong?"

"I am sure I don't know, if you don't know," the Chevalier answered, with a look of surprise and suspicion.

"To tell you frankly," said the Major, "I have my suspicions. I suppose—mind, I only suppose—that in our friend Clavering's life—who, between you and me, Captain Strong, we must own is about as loose a fish as any in my acquaintance—there are, no doubt, some queer secrets and stories which he would not like to have known: none of us would. And very likely this fellow, who calls himself Altamont, knows some story against Clavering, and has some hold on him, and gets money out of him on the strength of his information. I know some of the best men of the best families in England who are paying through the nose in that way. But their private affairs are no business of mine, Mr. Strong; and it is not to be supposed that because I go and dine

with a man, I pry into his secrets, or am answerable for all his past life. And so with our friend Clavering, I am most interested for his wife's sake, and her daughter's, who is a most charming creature: and when her ladyship asked me, I looked into her affairs, and tried to set them straight; and shall do so again, you understand, to the best of my humble power and ability, if I can make myself useful. And if I am called upon—you understand, if I am called upon—and—by the way, this Mr. Altamont, Mr. Strong? How is this Mr. Altamont? I believe you are acquainted with him. Is he in town?"

"I don't know that I am called upon to know where he is, Major Pendennis," said Strong, rising and taking up his hat in dudgeon, for the Major's patronising manner and impertinence of caution offended the honest gentleman not a little.

Pendennis's manner altered at once from a tone of hauteur to one of knowing good-humour. "Ah, Captain Strong, you are cautious too, I see; and quite right, my good sir, quite right. We don't know what ears walls may have, sir, or to whom we may be talking; and as a man of the world, and an old soldier,—an old and distinguished soldier, I have been told, Captain Strong,—you know very well that there is no use in throwing away your fire; you may have your ideas, and I may put two and two together and have mine. But there are things which don't concern him that many a man had better not know, eh, Captain? and which I, for one, won't know until I have reason for knowing them: and that I believe is your maxim too. With regard to our friend the Baronet, I think with you, it would be most advisable that he should be checked in his imprudent courses; and most strongly

reprehend any man's departure from his word, or any conduct of his which can give any pain to his family, or cause them annoyance in any way. That is my full and frank opinion, and I am sure it is yours."

"Certainly," said Mr. Strong, drily.

"I am delighted to hear it; delighted, that an old brother soldier should agree with me so fully. And I am exceedingly glad of the lucky meeting which has procured me the good fortune of your visit. Good evening. Thank you. Morgan, show the door to Captain Strong."

And Strong, preceded by Morgan, took his leave of Major Pendennis; the Chevalier not a little puzzled at the old fellow's prudence; and the valet, to say the truth, to the full as much perplexed at his master's reticence. For Mr. Morgan, in his capacity of accomplished valet, moved here and there in a house as silent as a shadow; and, as it so happened, during the latter part of his master's conversation with his visitor, had been standing very close to the door, and had overheard not a little of the talk between the two gentlemen, and a great deal more than he could understand.

"Who is that Altamont? know anything about him and Strong?" Mr. Morgan asked of Mr. Lightfoot, on the next convenient occasion when they met at the Club.

"Strong's his man of business, draws the Governor's bills, and indosses 'em, and does his odd jobs and that; and I suppose Altamont's in it too," Mr. Lightfoot replied. "That kite-flying, you know, Mr. M., always takes two or three on 'em to set the paper going. Altamont put the pot on at the Derby, and won a good bit of money. I wish the Governor could get some somewhere, and I could get my book paid up."

"Do you think my Lady would pay his debts again?" Morgan asked. "Find out that for me, Lightfoot, and I'll make it worth your while, my boy."

Major Pendennis had often said, with a laugh, that his valet Morgan was a much richer man than himself: and, indeed, by a long course of careful speculation, this wary and silent attendant had been amassing a considerable sum of money, during the years which he had passed in the Major's service, where he had made the acquaintance of many other valets of distinction, from whom he had learned the affairs of their principals. When Mr. Arthur came into his property, but not until then, Morgan had surprised the young gentleman by saying that he had a little sum of money, some fifty or a hundred pound, which he wanted to lay out to advantage; perhaps the gentlemen in the Temple, knowing about affairs and business and that, could help a poor fellow to a good investment? Morgan would be very much obliged to Mr. Arthur, most grateful and obliged indeed, if Arthur could tell him of one. When Arthur laughingly replied, that he knew nothing about money matters, and knew no earthly way of helping Morgan, the latter, with the utmost simplicity, was very grateful, very grateful indeed, to Mr. Arthur, and if Mr. Arthur *should* want a little money before his rents was paid, perhaps he would kindly remember that his uncle's old and faithful servant had some as he would like to put out: and be most proud if he could be useful anyways to any of the family.

The Prince of Fairoaks, who was tolerably prudent and had no need of ready money, would as soon have thought of borrowing from his uncle's servant as of

stealing the valet's pocket-handkerchief, and was on the point of making some haughty reply to Morgan's offer, but was checked by the humour of the transaction. Morgan a capitalist! Morgan offering to lend to him! The joke was excellent. On the other hand, the man might be quite innocent, and the proposal of money a simple offer of good-will. So Arthur withheld the sarcasm that was rising to his lips, and contented himself by declining Mr. Morgan's kind proposal. He mentioned the matter to his uncle, however, and congratulated the latter on having such a treasure in his service.

It was then that the Major said that he believed Morgan had been getting devilish rich for a devilish long time; in fact he had bought the house in Bury Street, in which his master was a lodger; and had actually made a considerable sum of money from his acquaintance with the Clavering family, and his knowledge obtained through his master that the Begum would pay all her husband's debts, by buying up as many of the Baronet's acceptances as he could raise money to purchase. Of these transactions the Major, however, knew no more than most gentlemen do of their servants, who live with us all our days and are strangers to us: so strong custom is, and so pitiless the distinction between class and class.

"So he offered to lend you money, did he?" the elder Pendennis remarked to his nephew. "He's a dev'lish sly fellow, and a dev'lish rich fellow; and there's many a nobleman would like to have such a valet in his service, and borrow from him too. And he ain't a bit changed, Monsieur Morgan. He does his work just as well as ever —he's always ready to my bell—steals about the room like a cat—he's so dev'lishly attached to me, Morgan!"

On the day of Strong's visit, the Major bethought him of Pen's story, and that Morgan might help him, and rallied the valet regarding his wealth with that free and insolent way which so high-placed a gentleman might be disposed to adopt towards so unfortunate a creature.

"I hear that you have got some money to invest, Morgan," said the Major.

It's Mr. Arthur has been telling, hang him! thought the valet.

"I'm glad my place is such a good one."

"Thank you, sir—I've no reason to complain of my place nor of my master," replied Morgan, demurely.

"You're a good fellow: and I believe you are attached to me; and I'm glad you get on well. And I hope you'll be prudent, and not be taking a public-house or that kind of thing."

A public-house, thought Morgan—me in a public-house!—the old fool!—Dammy, if I was ten years younger I'd set in Parlyment before I died, that I would.—"No, thank you kindly, sir. I don't think of the public line, sir. And I've got my little savings pretty well put out, sir."

"You do a little in the discounting way, eh, Morgan?"

"Yes, sir, a very little—I—I beg your pardon, sir—might I be so free as to ask a question?"

"Speak on, my good fellow," the elder said, graciously.

"About Sir Francis Clavering's paper, sir? Do you think he's any longer any good, sir? Will my Lady pay on 'em any more, sir?"

"What, you've done something in that business already?"

"Yes, sir, a little," replied Morgan, dropping down

his eyes. "And I don't mind owning, sir, and I hope I may take the liberty of saying, sir, that a little more would make me very comfortable if it turned out as well as the last."

"Why, how much have you netted by him, in Gad's name?" asked the Major.

"I've done a good bit, sir, at it: that I own, sir. Having some information, and made acquaintance with the fam'ly through your kindness, I put on the pot, sir."

"You did what?"

"I laid my money on, sir—I got all I could, and borrowed, and bought Sir Francis's bills; many of 'em had his name, and the gentleman's as is just gone out, Edward Strong, Esquire, sir: and of course I know of the blow hup and shindy as is took place in Grosvenor Place, sir; and as I may as well make my money as another, I'd be *very* much obleeged to you if you'd tell me whether my Lady will come down any more."

Although Major Pendennis was as much surprised at this intelligence regarding his servant, as if he had heard that Morgan was a disguised Marquis, about to throw off his mask and assume his seat in the House of Peers; and although he was of course indignant at the audacity of the fellow who had dared to grow rich under his nose, and without his cognisance; yet he had a natural admiration for every man who represented money and success, and found himself respecting Morgan, and being rather afraid of that worthy, as the truth began to dawn upon him.

"Well, Morgan," said he, "I mustn't ask how rich you are; and the richer the better for your sake, I'm sure. And if I could give you any information that could serve you, I would speedily help you. But

frankly, if Lady Clavering asks me whether she shall pay any more of Sir Francis's debts I shall advise and hope she won't, though I fear she will—and that is all I know. And so you are aware that Sir Francis is beginning again in his—eh—reckless and imprudent course?"

"At his old games, sir—can't prevent that gentleman. He will do it."

"Mr. Strong was saying that a Mr. Moss Abrams was the holder of one of Sir Francis Clavering's notes. Do you know anything of this Mr. Abrams or the amount of the bill?"

"Don't know the bill; know Abrams quite well, sir."

"I wish you would find out about it for me. And I wish you would find out where I can see Sir Francis Clavering, Morgan."

And Morgan said, "Thank you, sir—yes, sir—I will, sir;" and retired from the room, as he had entered it, with his usual stealthy respect and quiet humility; leaving the Major to muse and wonder over what he had just heard.

The next morning the valet informed Major Pendennis that he had seen Mr. Abrams; what was the amount of the bill that gentleman was desirous to negotiate; and that the Baronet would be sure to be in the back parlour of the "Wheel of Fortune" Tavern that day at one o'clock.

To this appointment Sir Francis Clavering was punctual, and as at one o'clock he sate in the parlour of the tavern in question, surrounded by spittoons, Windsor chairs, cheerful prints of boxers, trotting horses, and pedestrians, and the lingering of last night's tobacco

fumes—as the descendant of an ancient line sate in this delectable place accommodated with an old copy of "Bell's Life in London," much blotted with beer, the polite Major Pendennis walked into the apartment.

"So it's you, old boy?" asked the Baronet, thinking that Mr. Moss Abrams had arrived with the money.

"How do you do, Sir Francis Clavering? I wanted to see you, and followed you here," said the Major, at sight of whom the other's countenance fell.

Now that he had his opponent before him, the Major was determined to make a brisk and sudden attack upon him, and went into action at once. "I know," he continued, "who is the exceedingly disreputable person for whom you took me, Clavering; and the errand which brought you here."

"It ain't your business, is it?" asked the Baronet, with a sulky and deprecatory look. "Why are you following me about, and taking the command and meddling in my affairs, Major Pendennis? I've never done *you* any harm, have I? I've never had *your* money. And I don't choose to be dodged about in this way, and domineered over. I don't choose it, and I won't have it. If Lady Clavering has any proposal to make to me, let it be done in the regular way, and through the lawyers. I'd rather not have you."

"I am not come from Lady Clavering," the Major said, "but of my own accord, to try and remonstrate with you, Clavering, and see if you can be kept from ruin. It is but a month ago that you swore on your honour, and wanted to get a Bible to strengthen the oath, that you would accept no more bills, but content yourself with the allowance which Lady Clavering gives you. All your debts were paid with that proviso, and

you have broken it; this Mr. Abrams has a bill of yours for sixty pounds."

"It's an old bill. I take my solemn oath it's an old bill," shrieked out the Baronet.

"You drew it yesterday, and you dated it three months back purposely. By Gad, Clavering, you sicken me with lies. I can't help telling you so. I've no patience with you, by Gad. You cheat everybody, yourself included. I've seen a deal of the world, but I never met your equal at humbugging. It's my belief you had rather lie than not."

"Have you come here, you old, old beast, to tempt me to—to pitch into you, and—knock your old head off?" said the Baronet, with a poisonous look of hatred at the Major.

"What, sir?" shouted out the old Major, rising to his feet and clasping his cane, and looking so fiercely, that the Baronet's tone instantly changed towards him.

"No, no," said Clavering, piteously; "I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to be angry, or say anything unkind, only you're so damned harsh to me, Major Pendennis. What is it you want of me? Why have you been hunting me so? Do *you* want money out of me too? By Jove, you know I've not got a shilling,"—and so Clavering, according to his custom, passed from a curse into a whimper.

Major Pendennis saw, from the other's tone, that Clavering knew his secret was in the Major's hands.

"I've no errand from anybody, or no design upon you," Pendennis said, "but an endeavour, if it's not too late, to save you and your family from utter ruin, through the infernal recklessness of your courses. I knew your secret—"

"I didn't know it when I married her; upon my oath I didn't know it till the d——d scoundrel came back and told me himself; and it's the misery about that which makes me so reckless, Pendennis; indeed it is," the Baronet cried, clasping his hands.

"I knew your secret from the very first day when I saw Amory come drunk into your dining-room in Grosvenor Place. I never forget faces. I remember that fellow in Sydney a convict, and he remembers me. I know his trial, the date of his marriage, and of his reported death in the bush. I could swear to him. And I know you are no more married to Lady Clavering than I am. I've kept your secret well enough, for I've not told a single soul that I know it,—not your wife, not yourself till now."

"Poor Lady C., it would cut her up dreadfully," whimpered Sir Francis; "and it wasn't my fault, Major; you know it wasn't."

"Rather than allow you to go on ruining her as you do, I *will* tell her, Clavering, and tell all the world too; that is what I swear I will do, unless I can come to some terms with you, and put some curb on your infernal folly. By play, debt, and extravagance of all kinds, you've got through half your wife's fortune, and that of her legitimate heirs, mind—her legitimate heirs. Here it must stop. You can't live together. You're not fit to live in a great house like Clavering; and before three years more were over, would not leave a shilling to carry on. I've settled what must be done. You shall have six hundred a year; you shall go abroad and live on that. You must give up Parliament, and get on as well as you can. If you refuse, I give you my word I'll make the real state of things known to-morrow; I'll swear to

Amory, who, when identified, will go back to the country from whence he came, and will rid the widow of you and himself together. And so that boy of yours loses at once all title to old Snell's property, and it goes to your wife's daughter. Ain't I making myself pretty clearly understood?"

"You wouldn't be so cruel to that poor boy, would you, Pendennis?" asked the father, pleading piteously; "hang it, think about him. He's a nice boy; though he's dev'lish wild, I own—he's dev'lish wild."

"It's you who are cruel to him," said the old moralist. "Why, sir, you'll ruin him yourself inevitably in three years."

"Yes, but perhaps I won't have such dev'lish bad luck, you know;—the luck must turn: and I'll reform, by Gad, I'll reform. And if you were to split on me, it would cut up my wife so; you know it would, most infernally."

"To be parted from *you*," said the old Major, with a sneer; "you know she won't live with you again."

"But why can't Lady C. live abroad, or at Bath, or at Tunbridge, or at the doose, and I go on here?" Clavering continued. "I like being here better than abroad, and I like being in Parliament. It's dev'lish convenient being in Parliament. There's very few seats like mine left; and if I gave it 'em, I should not wonder the Ministry would give me an island to govern, or some dev'lish good thing; for you know I'm a gentleman of dev'lish good family, and have a handle to my name, and—and that sort of thing, Major Pendennis. Eh, don't you see? Don't you think they'd give me something dev'lish good if I was to play my cards well? And then, you know, I'd save money, and be kept out of the way of

the confounded hells and *rouge et noir*—and—and so I'd rather not give up Parliament, please." For at one instant to hate and defy a man, at the next to weep before him, and at the next to be perfectly confidential and friendly with him, was not an unusual process with our versatile-minded Baronet.

"As for your seat in Parliament," the Major said, with something of a blush on his cheek, and a certain tremor, which the other did not see, "you must part with that, Sir Francis Clavering, to—to me."

"What! are you going into the House, Major Pendennis?"

"No—not I; but my nephew, Arthur, is a very clever fellow, and would make a figure there: and when Clavering had two Members, his father might very likely have been one; and—and I should like Arthur to be there," the Major said.

"Dammy, does *he* know it, too?" cried out Clavering.

"Nobody knows anything out of this room," Pendennis answered; "and if you do this favour for me, I hold my tongue. If not, I'm a man of my word, and will do what I have said."

"I say, Major," said Sir Francis, with a peculiarly humble smile, "you—you couldn't get me my first quarter in advance, could you, like the best of fellows? You can do anything with Lady Clavering; and, upon my oath, I'll take up that bill of Abrams. The little dam scoundrel, I know he'll do me in the business—he always does; and if you could do this for me, we'd see, Major."

"And I think your best plan would be to go down in September to Clavering to shoot, and take my nephew with you, and introduce him. Yes, that will be the best time. And we will try and manage about the advance."

(Arthur may lend him that, thought old Pendennis. Confound him, a seat in Parliament is worth a hundred and fifty pounds.) "And, Clavering, you understand, of course, my nephew knows nothing about this business. You have a mind to retire: he is a Clavering man and a good representative for the borough; you introduce him, and your people vote for him—you see."

"When can you get me the hundred and fifty, Major? When shall I come and see you? Will you be at home this evening or to-morrow morning? Will you have anything here? They've got some dev'lish good bitters in the bar. I often have a glass of bitters, it sets one up so."

The old Major would take no refreshment; but rose and took his leave of the Baronet, who walked with him to the door of the "Wheel of Fortune," and then strolled into the bar, where he took a glass of gin and bitters with the landlady there: and a gentleman connected with the ring (who boarded at the "Wheel of F.") coming in, he and Sir Francis Clavering and the landlord talked about the fights and the news of the sporting world in general; and at length Mr. Moss Abrams arrived with the proceeds of the Baronet's bill, from which his own handsome commission was deducted, and out of the remainder Sir Francis "stood" a dinner at Greenwich to his distinguished friend, and passed the evening gaily at Vauxhall.

Meanwhile Major Pendennis, calling a cab in Piccadilly, drove to Lamb Court, Temple, where he speedily was closeted with his nephew in deep conversation.

After their talk they parted on very good terms, and it was in consequence of that unreported conversation, whereof the reader nevertheless can pretty well guess

the bearing, that Arthur expressed himself as we have heard in the colloquy with Warrington, which is reported in the last chapter.

When a man is tempted to do a tempting thing, he can find a hundred ingenious reasons for gratifying his liking: and Arthur thought very much that he would like to be in Parliament, and that he would like to distinguish himself there, and that he need not care much what side he took, as there was falsehood and truth on every side. And on this and on other matters he thought he would compromise with his conscience, and that Sadduceeism was a very convenient and good-humoured profession of faith.

CHAPTER LXIII

PHILLIS AND CORYDON

N a picturesque common in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, Lady Clavering had found a pretty villa, whither she retired after her conjugal disputes at the end of that unlucky London season. Miss Amory, of course, accompanied her mother, and Master Clavering came home for the holidays, with whom Blanche's chief occupation was to fight and quarrel. But this was only a home pastime, and the young school-boy was not fond of home sports. He found cricket, and horses, and plenty of friends at Tunbridge. The good-natured Begum's house was filled with a constant society of young gentlemen of thirteen, who ate and drank much too copiously of tarts and champagne, who rode races on the lawn, and frightened the fond mother, who smoked and made themselves sick, and the dining-room unbearable to Miss Blanche. She did not like the society of young gentlemen of thirteen.

As for that fair young creature, any change as long as it was change was pleasant to her; and for a week or two she would have liked poverty and a cottage, and

bread and cheese; and, for a night, perhaps, a dungeon and bread and water, and so the move to Tunbridge was by no means unwelcome to her. She wandered in the woods, and sketched trees and farm-houses; she read French novels habitually; she drove into Tunbridge Wells pretty often, and to any play, or ball, or conjuror, or musician who might happen to appear in the place; she slept a great deal; she quarrelled with mamma and Frank during the morning; she found the little village school and attended it, and first fondled the girls and thwarted the mistress, then scolded the girls and laughed at the teacher; she was constant at church, of course. It was a pretty little church, of immense antiquity—a little Anglo-Norman *bijou,* built the day before yesterday, and decorated with all sorts of painted windows, carved saints' heads, gilt scripture texts, and open pews. Blanche began forthwith to work a most correct high-church altar-cover for the church. She passed for a saint with the clergyman for a while, whom she quite took in, and whom she coaxed, and wheedled, and fondled so artfully, that poor Mrs. Smirke, who at first was charmed with her, then bore with her, then would hardly speak to her, was almost mad with jealousy. Mrs. Smirke was the wife of our old friend Smirke, Pen's tutor and poor Helen's suitor. He had consoled himself for her refusal with a young lady from Clapham whom his mamma provided. When the latter died, our friend's views became every day more and more pronounced. He cut off his coat collar, and let his hair grow over his back. He rigorously gave up the curl which he used to sport on his forehead, and the tie of his neck-cloth of which he was rather proud. He went without any tie at all. He went without dinner

on Fridays. He read the Roman Hours, and intimated that he was ready to receive confessions in the vestry. The most harmless creature in the world, he was denounced as a black and most dangerous Jesuit and Papist, by Muffin of the Dissenting chapel, and Mr. Simeon Knight at the old church. Mr. Smirke had built his chapel of ease with the money left him by his mother at Clapham. Lord! lord! what would she have said to hear a table called an altar! to see candlesticks on it! to get letters signed on the Feast of Saint So-and-so, or the Vigil of Saint What-do-you-call-'em! All these things did the boy of Clapham practise; his faithful wife following him. But when Blanche had a conference of near two hours in the vestry with Mr. Smirke, Belinda paced up and down on the grass, where there were only two little grave-stones as yet; she wished that she had a third there: only, only he would offer very likely to that creature, who had infatuated him in a fortnight. No, she would retire; she would go into a convent, and profess and leave him. Such bad thoughts had Smirke's wife and his neighbours regarding him; these, thinking him in direct correspondence with the Bishop of Rome; that, bewailing errors to her even more odious and fatal; and yet our friend meant no earthly harm. The post-office never brought him any letters from the Pope; he thought Blanche, to be sure, at first, the most pious, gifted, right-thinking, fascinating person he had ever met; and her manner of singing the Chants delighted him—but after a while he began to grow rather tired of Miss Amory, her ways and graces grew stale somehow; then he was doubtful about Miss Amory; then she made a disturbance in his school, lost her temper, and rapped the children's fingers. Blanche inspired this

admiration and satiety, somehow, in many men. She tried to please them, and flung out all her graces at once; came down to them with all her jewels on, all her smiles, and cajoleries, and coaxings, and ogles. Then she grew tired of them and of trying to please them, and never having cared about them, dropped them: and the men grew tired of her, and dropped her too. It was a happy night for Belinda when Blanche went away; and her husband, with rather a blush and a sigh, said "he had been deceived in her; he had thought her endowed with many precious gifts, he feared they were mere tinsel; he thought she had been a right-thinking person, he feared she had merely made religion an amusement —she certainly had quite lost her temper to the schoolmistress, and beat Polly Rucker's knuckles cruelly." Belinda flew to his arms, there was no question about the grave or the veil any more. He tenderly embraced her on the forehead. "There is none like thee, my Belinda," he said, throwing his fine eyes up to the ceiling, "precious among women!" As for Blanche, from the instant she lost sight of him and Belinda, she never thought or cared about either any more.

But when Arthur went down to pass a few days at Tunbridge Wells with the Begum, this stage of indifference had not arrived on Miss Blanche's part or on that of the simple clergyman. Smirke believed her to be an angel and wonder of a woman. Such a perfection he had never seen, and sate listening to her music in the summer evenings, open-mouthed, rapt in wonder, tea-less, and bread-and-butterless. Fascinating as he had heard the music of the opera to be—he had never but once attended an exhibition of that nature (which he mentioned with a blush and a sigh—it was on that day

when he had accompanied Helen and her son to the play at Chatteris)—he could not conceive anything more delicious, more celestial, he had almost said, than Miss Amory's music. She was a most gifted being: she had a precious soul: she had the most remarkable talents—to all outward seeming, the most heavenly disposition, &c., &c. It was in this way that, being then at the height of his own fever and bewitchment for Blanche, Smirke discoursed to Arthur about her.

The meeting between the two old acquaintances had been very cordial. Arthur loved anybody who loved his mother; Smirke could speak on that theme with genuine feeling and emotion. They had a hundred things to tell each other of what had occurred in their lives. "Arthur would perceive," Smirke said, "that his—his views on church matters had developed themselves since their acquaintance." Mrs. Smirke, a most exemplary person, seconded them with all her endeavours. He had built this little church on his mother's demise, who had left him provided with a sufficiency of worldly means. Though in the cloister himself, he had heard of Arthur's reputation. He spoke in the kindest and most saddened tone; he held his eyelids down, and bowed his fair head on one side. Arthur was immensely amused with him; with his airs; with his follies and simplicity; with his blank stock and long hair; with his real goodness, kindness, friendliness of feeling. And his praises of Blanche pleased and surprised our friend not a little, and made him regard her with eyes of particular favour.

The truth is, Blanche was very glad to see Arthur; as one is glad to see an agreeable man in the country, who brings down the last news and stories from the great city; who can talk better than most country-folks, at

least can talk that darling London jargon, so dear and indispensable to London people, so little understood by persons out of the world. The first day Pen came down, he kept Blanche laughing for hours after dinner. She sang her songs with redoubled spirit. She did not scold her mother: she fondled and kissed her, to the honest Begum's surprise. When it came to bed-time, she said, "*Déjà!*" with the prettiest air of regret possible; and was really quite sorry to go to bed, and squeezed Arthur's hand quite fondly. He on his side gave her pretty palm a very cordial pressure. Our young gentleman was of that turn, that eyes very moderately bright dazzled him.

"She is very much improved," thought Pen, looking out into the night, "very much. I suppose the Begum won't mind my smoking with the window open. She's a jolly good old woman, and Blanche is immensely improved. I liked her manner with her mother to-night. I liked her laughing way with that stupid young cub of a boy, whom they oughtn't to allow to get tipsy. She sang those little verses very prettily; they were devilish pretty verses too, though I say it who shouldn't say it." And he hummed a tune which Blanche had put to some verses of his own. "Ah! what a fine night! How jolly a cigar is at night! How pretty that little Saxon church looks in the moonlight! I wonder what old Warrington's doing? Yes, she's a dayvlish nice little thing, as my uncle says."

"Oh, heavenly!" Here broke out a voice from a clematis-covered casement near—a girl's voice: it was the voice of the author of *Mes Larmes*.

Pen burst into a laugh. "Don't tell about my smoking," he said, leaning out of his own window.

"Oh! go on! I adore it," cried the lady of *Mes Larmes*. "Heavenly night! Heavenly, heavenly moon! but I must shut my window and not talk to

you, on account of *les mœurs!* How droll they are, *les mœurs!* Adieu." And Pen began to sing the Good Night to Don Basilio.

The next day they were walking in the fields together, laughing and chattering—the gayest pair of friends. They talked about the days of their youth, and Blanche was prettily sentimental. They talked

about Laura, dearest Laura—Blanche had loved her as a sister: was she happy with that odd Lady Rockminster? Wouldn't she come and stay with them at Tunbridge? Oh, what walks they would take together! What songs they would sing—the old, old songs. Laura's voice was splendid. Did Arthur—she must call him Arthur—remember the songs they sang in the happy old days, now he was grown such a great man, and had such a *succès?* &c. &c.

And the day after, which was enlivened with a happy ramble through the woods to Penshurst, and a sight of that pleasant park and hall, came that conversation with the curate which we have narrated, and which made our young friend think more and more.

"Is she all this perfection?" he asked himself. "Has she become serious and religious? Does she tend schools and visit the poor? Is she kind to her mother and brother? Yes, I am sure of that: I have seen her." And walking with his old tutor over his little parish, and going to visit his school, it was with inexpressible delight that Pen found Blanche seated instructing the children and fancied to himself how patient she must be, how good-natured, how ingenuous, how really simple in her tastes, and unspoiled by the world.

"And do you really like the country?" he asked her, as they walked together.

"I should like never to see that odious city again. Oh, Arthur—that is, Mr. — well, Arthur, then—one's good thoughts grow up in these sweet woods and calm solitudes, like those flowers which won't bloom in London, you know. The gardener comes and changes our balconies once a week. I don't think I shall bear to look London in the face again—its odious, smoky, brazen face! But, heigho!"

Miss. Amory's interesting employment

"Why that sigh, Blanche?"

"Never mind why."

"Yes, I do mind why. Tell me, tell me everything."

"I wish you hadn't come down;" and a second edition of *Mes Soupirs* came out.

"You don't want me, Blanche?"

"I don't want you to go away. I don't think this house will be very happy without you, and that's why I wish that you never had come."

Mes Soupirs were here laid aside, and *Mes Larmes* had begun.

Ah! What answer is given to those in the eyes of a young woman? What is the method employed for drying them? What took place? O ringdoves and roses, O dews and wild-flowers, O waving greenwoods and balmy airs of summer! Here were two battered London rakes, taking themselves in for a moment, and fancying that they were in love with each other, like Phillis and Corydon!

When one thinks of country houses and country walks, one wonders that any man is left unmarried.

CHAPTER LXIV

TEMPTATION

EASY and frank-spoken as Pendennis commonly was with Warrington, how came it that Arthur did not inform the friend and depositary of all his secrets, of the little circumstances which had taken place at the villa near Tunbridge Wells? He talked about the discovery of his old tutor Smirke, freely enough, and of his wife, and of his Anglo-Norman church, and of his departure from Clapham to Rome; but, when asked about Blanche, his answers were evasive or general; he said she was a good-natured clever little thing, that rightly guided she might make no such bad wife after all, but that he had for the moment no intention of marriage, that his days of romance were over, that he was contented with his present lot, and so forth.

In the meantime there came occasionally to Lamb Court, Temple, pretty little satin envelopes, superscribed in the neatest handwriting, and sealed with one of those admirable ciphers, which, if Warrington had been curious enough to watch his friend's letters, or indeed if the cipher had been decipherable, would have

shown George that Mr. Arthur was in correspondence with a young lady whose initials were B.A. To these pretty little compositions, Mr. Pen replied in his best and gallantest manner; with jokes, with news of the town, with points of wit, nay, with pretty little verses very likely, in reply to the versicles of the Muse of "Mes Larmes." Blanche we know rhymes with "branch," and "stanch," and "launch," and no doubt a gentleman of Pen's ingenuity would not forego these advantages of position, and would ring the pretty little changes upon these pleasing notes. Indeed we believe that those love-verses of Mr. Pen's, which had such a pleasing success in the "Rose-leaves," that charming Annual edited by Lady Violet Lebas, and illustrated by portraits of the female nobility by the famous artist Pinkney, were composed at this period of our hero's life; and were first addressed to Blanche, per post, before they figured in print, *cornets* as it were to Pinkney's pictorial garland.

"Verses are all very well," the elder Pendennis said, who found Pen scratching down one of these artless effusions at the Club as he was waiting for his dinner; "and letter-writing if mamma allows it, and between such old country friends of course there may be a correspondence, and that sort of thing—but mind, Pen, and don't commit yourself, my boy. For who knows what the doose may happen? The best way is to make your letters safe. I never wrote a letter in all my life that would commit me, and demmy, sir, I have had some experience of women." And the worthy gentleman, growing more garrulous and confidential with his nephew as he grew older, told many affecting instances of the evil results consequent upon this want of cau-

tion to many persons in "society;"—how from using too ardent expressions in some poetical notes to the widow Naylor, young Spoony had subjected himself to a visit of remonstrance from the widow's brother, Colonel Flint; and thus had been forced into a marriage with a woman old enough to be his mother: how when Louisa Salter had at length succeeded in securing young Sir John Bird, Hopwood, of the Blues, produced some letters which Miss S. had written to him, and caused a withdrawal on Bird's part, who afterwards was united to Miss Stickney, of Lyme Regis, &c. The Major, if he had not reading, had plenty of observation, and could back his wise saws with a multitude of modern instances, which he had acquired in a long and careful perusal of the great book of the world.

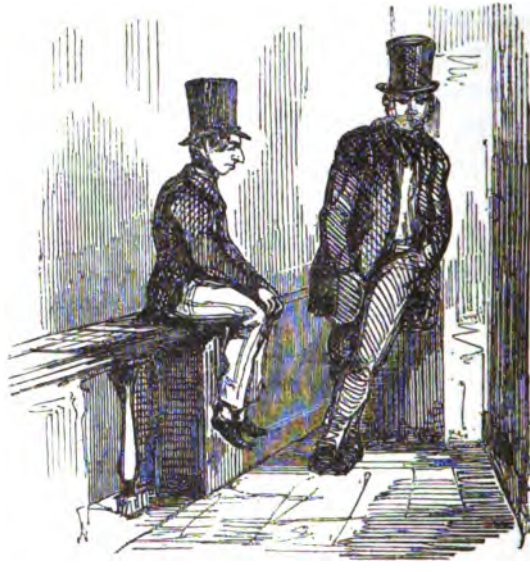
Pen laughed at the examples, and blushing a little at his uncle's remonstrances, said that he would bear them in mind and be cautious. He blushed, perhaps, because he *had* borne them in mind; because he *was* cautious: because in his letters to Miss Blanche he had from instinct, or honesty perhaps, refrained from any avowals which might compromise him. "Don't you remember the lesson I had, sir, in Lady Mirabel's—Miss Fotheringay's affair? I am not to be caught again, uncle," Arthur said with mock frankness and humility. Old Pendennis congratulated himself and his nephew heartily on the latter's prudence and progress, and was pleased at the position which Arthur was taking as a man of the world.

No doubt, if Warrington had been consulted, his opinion would have been different: and he would have told Pen that the boy's foolish letters were better than the man's adroit compliments and slippery gallantries;

that to win the woman he loves, only a knave or a coward advances under cover, with subterfuges, and a retreat secured behind him: but Pen spoke not on this matter to Mr. Warrington, knowing pretty well that he was guilty, and what his friend's verdict would be.

Colonel Altamont had not been for many weeks absent on his foreign tour—Sir Francis Clavering having retired meanwhile into the country pursuant to his agreement with Major Pendennis—when the ills of fate began to fall rather suddenly and heavily upon the sole remaining partner of the little firm of Shepherd's Inn. When Strong, at parting with Altamont, refused the loan proffered by the latter in the fulness of his purse and the generosity of his heart, he made such a sacrifice to conscience and delicacy as caused him many an after-twinge and pang; and he felt—it was not very many hours in his life he had experienced the feeling—that in this juncture of his affairs he had been too delicate and too scrupulous. Why should a fellow in want refuse a kind offer kindly made? Why should a thirsty man decline a pitcher of water from a friendly hand, because it was a little soiled? Strong's conscience smote him for refusing what the other had fairly come by, and generously proffered: and he thought ruefully, now it was too late, that Altamont's cash would have been as well in his pocket as in that of the gambling-house proprietor at Baden or Ems, with whom his Excellency would infallibly leave his Derby winnings. It was whispered among the tradesmen, bill-discounters, and others who had commercial dealings with Captain Strong, that he and the Baronet had parted company, and that the Captain's "paper" was henceforth of no value. The tradesmen, who had put a wonderful con-

fidence in him hitherto,—for who could resist Strong's jolly face and frank and honest demeanour?—now began to pour in their bills with a cowardly mistrust and unanimity. The knocks at the Shepherd's Inn cham-



bers' door were constant, and tailors, bootmakers, pastrycooks who had furnished dinners, in their own persons, or by the boys their representatives, held levees on Strong's stairs. To these were added one or two persons of a less clamorous but far more sly and dangerous sort,—the young clerks of lawyers, namely, who lurked about the Inn, or concerted with Mr. Campion's young man in the chambers hard by, having in their dismal pocket-books copies of writs to be served on Edward Strong, requiring him to appear on an early day next term before our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and answer to &c. &c.

From this invasion of creditors, poor Strong, who had

not a guinea in his pocket, had, of course, no refuge but that of the Englishman's castle, into which he retired, shutting the outer and inner door upon the enemy, and not quitting his stronghold until after nightfall. Against this outer barrier the foe used to come and knock and curse in vain, whilst the Chevalier peeped at them from behind the little curtain which he had put over the orifice of his letter-box; and had the dismal satisfaction of seeing the faces of furious clerk and fiery dun, as they dashed up against the door and retreated from it. But as they could not be always at his gate, or sleep on his staircase, the enemies of the Chevalier sometimes left him free.

Strong, when so pressed by his commercial antagonists, was not quite alone in his defence against them, but had secured for himself an ally or two. His friends were instructed to communicate with him by a system of private signals: and they thus kept the garrison from starving by bringing in necessary supplies, and kept up Strong's heart and prevented him from surrendering, by visiting him and cheering him in his retreat. Two of Ned's most faithful allies were Huxter and Miss Fanny Bolton: when hostile visitors were prowling about the Inn, Fanny's little sisters were taught a particular cry or *jödel,* which they innocently whooped in the court: when Fanny and Huxter came up to visit Strong, they archly sang this same note at his door; when that barrier was straightway opened, the honest garrison came out smiling, the provisions and the pot of porter were brought in, and in the society of his faithful friends the beleaguered one passed a comfortable night. There are some men who could not live under this excitement, but Strong was a brave man, as we have said, who had seen service and never lost heart in peril.

But besides allies, our general had secured for himself, under difficulties, that still more necessary aid,—a retreat. It has been mentioned in a former part of this history, how Messrs. Costigan and Bows lived in the house next door to Captain Strong, and that the window of one of their rooms was not very far off the kitchen-window which was situated in the upper story of Strong's chambers. A leaden water-pipe and gutter served for the two; and Strong, looking out from his kitchen one day, saw that he could spring with great ease up to the sill of his neighbour's window, and clamber up the pipe which communicated from one to the other. He had laughingly shown this refuge to his chum, Altamont; and they had agreed that it would be as well not to mention the circumstance to Captain Costigan, whose duns were numerous, and who would be constantly flying down the pipe into their apartments if this way of escape were shown to him.

But now that the evil days were come, Strong made use of the passage, and one afternoon burst in upon Bows and Costigan with his jolly face, and explained that the enemy was in waiting on his staircase, and that he had taken this means of giving them the slip. So while Mr. Mark's aides-de-camp were in waiting in the passage of No. 3, Strong walked down the steps of No. 4, dined at the Albion, went to the play, and returned home at midnight, to the astonishment of Mrs. Bolton and Fanny, who had not seen him quit his chambers and could not conceive how he could have passed the line of sentries.

Strong bore this siege for some weeks with admirable spirit and resolution, and as only such an old and brave soldier would, for the pains and privations which he had

An Escape

to endure were enough to depress any man of ordinary courage; and what vexed and "riled" him (to use his own expression) was the infernal indifference and cowardly ingratitude of Clavering, to whom he wrote letter after letter, which the Baronet never acknowledged by a single word, or by the smallest remittance, though a five-pound note, as Strong said, at that time would have been a fortune to him.

But better days were in store for the Chevalier, and in the midst of his despondency and perplexities there came to him a most welcome aid. "Yes, if it hadn't been for this good fellow here," said Strong; "for a good fellow you are, Altamont, my boy, and hang me if I don't stand by you as long as I live; I think, Pendennis, it would have been all up with Ned Strong. It was the fifth week of my being kept a prisoner, for I couldn't be always risking my neck across that water-pipe, and taking my walks abroad through poor old Cos's window, and my spirit was quite broken, sir—dammy, quite beat, and I was thinking of putting an end to myself, and should have done it in another week, when who should drop down from heaven but Altamont!"

"Heaven ain't exactly the place, Ned," said Altamont. "I came from Baden-Baden," said he, "and I'd had a deuced lucky month there, that's all."

"Well, sir, he took up Mark's bill, and he paid the other fellows that were upon me, like a man, sir, that he did," said Strong, enthusiastically.

"And I shall be very happy to stand a bottle of claret for this company, and as many more as the company chooses," said Mr. Altamont, with a blush. "Hallo!

waiter, bring us a magnum of the right sort, do you hear? And we'll drink our healths all round, sir—and may every good fellow like Strong find another good fellow to stand by him at a pinch. That's *my* sentiment, Mr. Pendennis, though I don't like your name."

"No! And why?" asked Arthur.

Strong pressed the Colonel's foot under the table here; and Altamont, rather excited, filled up another bumper, nodded to Pen, drank off his wine, and said, "*He* was a gentleman, and that was sufficient, and they were all gentlemen."

The meeting between these "all gentlemen" took place at Richmond, whither Pendennis had gone to dinner, and where he found the Chevalier and his friend at table in the coffee-room. Both of the latter were exceedingly hilarious, talkative, and excited by wine, and Strong, who was an admirable story-teller, told the story of his own siege and adventures and escapes with great liveliness and humour, and described the talk of the sheriff's officers at his door, the pretty little signals of Fanny, the grotesque exclamations of Costigan when the Chevalier burst in at his window, and his final rescue by Altamont, in a most graphic manner, and so as greatly to interest his hearers.

"As for me, it's nothing," Altamont said. "When a ship's paid off, a chap spends his money, you know. And it's the fellers at the black and red at Baden-Baden that did it. I won a good bit of money there, and intend to win a good bit more, don't I, Strong? I'm going to take him with me. I've got a system. I'll make his fortune, I tell you. I'll make your fortune, if you like —dammy, everybody's fortune. But what I'll do, and no mistake, boys, I promise you. I'll put in for that

little Fanny. Dammy, sir, what do you think she did? She had two pound, and I'm blest if she didn't go and lend it to Ned Strong! Didn't she, Ned? Let's drink her health."

"With all my heart," said Arthur, and pledged this toast with the greatest cordiality.

Mr. Altamont then began, with the greatest volubility, and at great length, to describe his system. He said that it was infallible, if played with coolness; that he had it from a chap at Baden, who had lost by it, it was true, but because he had not capital enough; if he could have stood one more turn of the wheel, he would have had all his money back; that he and several more chaps were going to make a bank, and try it; and that he would put every shilling he was worth into it, and had come back to this country, for the express purpose of fetching away his money, and Captain Strong; that Strong should play for him: that he could trust Strong and his temper much better than he could his own, and much better than Bloundell-Bloundell or the Italian that "stood in." As he emptied his bottle, the Colonel described at full length all his plans and prospects to Pen, who was interested in listening to his story, and the confessions of his daring and lawless good-humour.

"I met that queer fellow Altamont the other day," Pen said to his uncle, a day or two afterwards.

"Altamont? What Altamont? There's Lord Westport's son," said the Major.

"No, no; the fellow who came tipsy into Clavering's dining-room one day when we were there," said the nephew, laughing; "and he said he did not like the name of Pendennis, though he did me the honour to think that I was a good fellow."

"I don't know any man of the name of Altamont, I give you my honour," said the impenetrable Major; "and as for your acquaintance, I think the less you have to do with him the better, Arthur."

Arthur laughed again. "He is going to quit the country, and make his fortune by a gambling system. He and my amiable college acquaintance, Bloundell, are partners, and the Colonel takes out Strong with him as aide-de-camp. What is it that binds the Chevalier and Clavering, I wonder?"

"I should think, mind you, Pen, I should think—but of course I have only the idea—that there has been something in Clavering's previous life which gives these fellows and some others a certain power over him; and if there should be such a secret, which is no affair of ours, my boy, dammy, I say, it ought to be a lesson to a man to keep himself straight in life, and not to give any man a chance over him."

"Why, I think *you* have some means of persuasion over Clavering, uncle, or why should he give me that seat in Parliament?"

"Clavering thinks he ain't fit for Parliament," the Major answered. "No more he is. What's to prevent him from putting you or anybody else into his place if he likes? Do you think that the Government or the Opposition would make any bones about accepting the seat if he offered it to them? Why should you be more squeamish than the first men, and the most honourable men, and men of the highest birth and position in the country, begad?" The Colonel had an answer of this kind to most of Pen's objections, and Pen accepted his uncle's replies, not so much because he believed them, but because he wished to believe them. We do a thing

—which of us has not?—not because "everybody does it," but because we like it; and our acquiescence, alas! proves not that everybody is right, but that we and the rest of the world are poor creatures alike.

At his next visit to Tunbridge, Mr. Pen did not forget to amuse Miss Blanche with the history which he had learned at Richmond of the Chevalier's imprisonment, and of Altamont's gallant rescue. And after he had told his tale in his usual satirical way, he mentioned with praise and emotion little Fanny's generous behaviour to the Chevalier, and Altamont's enthusiasm in her behalf.

Miss Blanche was somewhat jealous, and a good deal piqued and curious about Fanny. Among the many confidential little communications which Arthur made to Miss Amory in the course of their delightful rural drives and their sweet evening walks, it may be supposed that our hero would not forget a story so interesting to himself, and so likely to be interesting to her, as that of the passion and care of the poor little Ariadne of Shepherd's Inn. His own part in that drama he described, to do him justice, with becoming modesty; the moral which he wished to draw from the tale being one in accordance with his usual satirical mood, viz., that women get over their first loves quite as easily as men do (for the fair Blanche, in their *intimes* conversations, did not cease to twit Mr. Pen about his notorious failure in his own virgin attachment to the Fotheringay), and, number one being withdrawn, transfer themselves to number two without much difficulty. And poor little Fanny was offered up in sacrifice as an instance to prove this theory. What griefs she had endured and surmounted,

what bitter pangs of hopeless attachment she had gone through, what time it had taken to heal those wounds of the tender little bleeding heart, Mr. Pen did not know, or perhaps did not choose to know; for he was at once modest and doubtful about his capabilities as a conqueror of hearts, and averse to believe that he had executed any dangerous ravages on that particular one, though his own instance and argument told against himself in this case; for if, as he said, Miss Fanny was by this time in love with her surgical adorer, who had neither good looks nor good manners, nor wit, nor anything but ardour and fidelity to recommend him, must she not, in her first sickness of the love-complaint, have had a serious attack, and suffered keenly for a man, who had certainly a number of the showy qualities which Mr. Huxter wanted?

"You wicked odious creature," Miss Blanche said, "I believe that you are enraged with Fanny for being so impudent as to forget you, and that you are actually jealous of Mr. Huxter." Perhaps Miss Amory was right, as the blush which came in spite of himself and tingled upon Pendennis's cheek (one of those blows with which a man's vanity is constantly slapping his face,) proved to Pen that he was angry to think he had been superseded by such a rival. By such a fellow as that! without any conceivable good quality! Oh, Mr. Pendennis! (although this remark does not apply to such a smart fellow as you) if Nature had not made that provision for each sex in the credulity of the other, which sees good qualities where none exist, good looks in donkeys' ears, wit in their numskulls, and music in their bray, there would not have been near so much marrying and giving in marriage as now obtains, and as is neces-

sary for the due propagation and continuance of the noble race to which we belong!

"Jealous or not," Pen said, "and, Blanche, I don't say no, I should have liked Fanny to come to a better end than that. I don't like histories that end in that cynical way; and when we arrive at the conclusion of the story of a pretty girl's passion, to find such a figure as Huxter's at the last page of the tale. Is all life a compromise, my lady fair, and the end of the battle of love an ignoble surrender? Is the search for the Cupid which my poor little Psyche pursued in the darkness—the god of her soul's longing—the god of the blooming cheek and rainbow pinions—to result in Huxter, smelling of tobacco and gallipots? I wish, though I don't see it in life, that people could be like Jenny and Jessamy, or my lord and lady Clementina in the story-books and fashionable novels, and at once under the ceremony, and, as it were, at the parson's benediction, become perfectly handsome and good and happy ever after."

"And don't you intend to be good and happy, pray, Monsieur le Misanthrope—and are you very discontented with your lot—and will your marriage be a compromise—(asked the author of "Mes Larmes," with a charming *moue*)—and is your Psyche an odious vulgar wretch? You wicked satirical creature, I can't abide you! You take the hearts of young things, play with them, and fling them away with scorn. You ask for love and trample on it. You—you make me cry, that you do, Arthur, and—and don't—and I *won't* be consoled in that way—and I think Fanny was quite right in leaving such a heartless creature."

"Again, I don't say no," said Pen, looking very

gloomily at Blanche, and not offering by any means to repeat the attempt at consolation, which had elicited that sweet monosyllable "don't" from the young lady. "I don't think I have much of what people call heart; but I don't profess it. I made my venture when I was eighteen, and lighted my lamp and went in search of Cupid. And what was my discovery of love!—a vulgar dancing-woman. I failed, as everybody does, almost everybody; only it is luckier to fail before marriage than after."

"*Merci du choix, Monsieur,*" said the Sylphide, making a curtsey.

"Look, my little Blanche," said Pen, taking her hand, and with his voice of sad good-humour; "at least I stoop to no flatteries."

"Quite the contrary," said Miss Blanche.

"And tell you no foolish lies, as vulgar men do. Why should you and I, with our experience, ape romance and dissemble passion? I do not believe Miss Blanche Amory to be peerless among the beautiful, nor the greatest poetess, nor the most surpassing musician, any more than I believe you to be the tallest woman in the whole world—like the giantess whose picture we saw as we rode through the fair yesterday. But if I don't set you up as a heroine, neither do I offer you your very humble servant as a hero. But I think you are—well, there, I think you are very sufficiently good-looking."

"*Merci,*" Miss Blanche said with another curtsey.

"I think you sing charmingly. I'm sure you're clever. I hope and believe that you are good-natured, and that you will be companionable."

"And so provided I bring you a certain sum of money and a seat in Parliament, you condescend to fling to me

your royal pocket-handkerchief," said Blanche. "*Que d'honneur!* We used to call your Highness the Prince of Fairoaks. What an honour to think that I am to be elevated to the throne, and to bring the seat in Parliament as backsheesh to the sultan! I am glad I am clever, and that I can play and sing to your liking; my songs will amuse my lord's leisure."

"And if thieves are about the house," said Pen, grimly pursuing the simile, "forty besetting thieves in the shape of lurking cares and enemies in ambush and passions in arms, my Morgiana will dance round me with a tambourine, and kill all my rogues and thieves with a smile. Won't she?" But Pen looked as if he did not believe that she would. "Ah, Blanche," he continued after a pause, "don't be angry; don't be hurt at my truth-telling. Don't you see that I always take you at your word? You say you will be a slave and dance —I say, dance. You say, 'I take you with what you bring;' I say, 'I take you with what you bring.' To the necessary deceits and hypocrisies of our life, why add any that are useless and unnecessary? If I offer myself to you because I think we have a fair chance of being happy together, and because by your help I may get for both of us a good place and a not undistinguished name, why ask me to feign raptures and counterfeit romance, in which neither of us believe? Do you want me to come wooing in a Prince Prettyman's dress from the masquerade warehouse, and to pay you compliments like Sir Charles Grandison? Do you want me to make you verses as in the days when we were—when we were children? I will if you like, and sell them to Bacon and Bungay afterwards. Shall I feed my pretty princess with *bonbons?*"

"*Mais j'adore les bonbons, moi,*" said the little Sylphide, with a queer piteous look.

"I can buy a hatful at Fortnum and Mason's for a guinea. And it shall have its bonbons, its pootty little sugar-plums, that it shall," Pen said with a bitter smile. "Nay, my dear, nay, my dearest little Blanche, don't cry. Dry the pretty eyes, I can't bear that;" and he proceeded to offer that consolation which the circumstance required, and which the tears, the genuine tears of vexation, which now sprang from the angry eyes of the author of "Mes Larmes" demanded.

The scornful and sarcastic tone of Pendennis quite frightened and overcame the girl. "I—I don't want your consolation. I—I never was—so—spoken to bef—by any of my—my—by anybody"—she sobbed out, with much simplicity.

"*Anybody!*" shouted out Pen, with a savage burst of laughter, and Blanche blushed one of the most genuine blushes which her cheek had ever exhibited, and she cried out, "Oh, Arthur, *vous êtes un homme terrible!*" She felt bewildered, frightened, oppressed, the worldly little flirt who had been playing at love for the last dozen years of her life, and yet not displeased at meeting a master.

"Tell me, Arthur," she said, after a pause in this strange lovemaking, "why does Sir Francis Clavering give up his seat in Parliament?"

"*Au fait,* why does he give it to me?" asked Arthur, now blushing in his turn.

"You always mock me, sir," she said. "If it is good to be in Parliament, why does Sir Francis go out?"

"My uncle has talked him over. He always said that you were not sufficiently provided for. In the—the

family disputes, when your mamma paid his debts so liberally, it was stipulated, I suppose, that you—that is, that I—that is, upon my word, I don't know why he goes out of Parliament," Pen said, with rather a forced laugh. "You see, Blanche, that you and I are two good little children, and that this marriage has been arranged for us by our mammas and uncles, and that we must be obedient, like a good little boy and girl."

So, when Pen went to London, he sent Blanche a box of bonbons, each sugar-plum of which was wrapped up in ready-made French verses, of the most tender kind; and, besides, despatched to her some poems of his own manufacture, quite as artless and authentic; and it was no wonder that he did not tell Warrington what his conversations with Miss Amory had been, of so delicate a sentiment were they, and of a nature so necessarily private.

And, if, like many a worse and better man, Arthur Pendennis, the widow's son, was meditating an apostasy, and going to sell himself to—we all know whom,—at least the renegade did not pretend to be a believer in the creed to which he was ready to swear. And if every woman and man in this kingdom, who has sold her or himself for money or position, as Mr. Pendennis was about to do, would but purchase a copy of his memoirs, what tons of volumes Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co. would sell!

CHAPTER LXV

IN WHICH PEN BEGINS HIS CANVASS

MELANCHOLY as the great house at Clavering Park had been in the days before his marriage, when its bankrupt proprietor was a refugee in foreign lands, it was not much more cheerful now when Sir Francis Clavering came to inhabit it. The greater part of the mansion was shut up, and the Baronet only occupied a few of the rooms on the ground floor, where his housekeeper and her assistant from the lodge gate waited upon the luckless gentleman in his forced retreat, and cooked a part of the game which he spent the dreary mornings in shooting. Lightfoot, his man, had passed over to my Lady's service; and, as Pen was informed in a letter from Mr. Smirke, who performed the ceremony, had executed his prudent intention of marrying Mrs. Bonner, my Lady's woman, who, in her mature years, was stricken with the

charms of the youth, and endowed him with her savings and her elderly person. To be landlord and landlady of the "Clavering Arms" was the ambition of both of them; and it was agreed that they were to remain in Lady Clavering's service until quarter-day arrived, when they were to take possession of their hotel. Pen graciously promised that he would give his election dinner there, when the Baronet should vacate his seat in the young man's favour; and, as it had been agreed by his uncle, to whom Clavering seemed to be able to refuse nothing, Arthur came down in September on a visit to Clavering Park, the owner of which was very glad to have a companion who would relieve his loneliness, and perhaps would lend him a little ready money.

Pen furnished his host with these desirable supplies a couple of days after he had made his appearance at Clavering: and no sooner were these small funds in Sir Francis's pocket, than the latter found he had business at Chatteris and the neighbouring watering-places, of which ——shire boasts many, and went off to see to his affairs, which were transacted, as might be supposed, at the county race-grounds and billiard-rooms. Arthur could live alone well enough, having many mental resources and amusements which did not require other persons' company: he could walk with the gamekeeper of a morning, and for the evenings there were plenty of books and occupation for a literary genius like Mr. Arthur, who required but a cigar and a sheet of paper or two to make the night pass away pleasantly. In truth, in two or three days he had found the society of Sir Francis Clavering perfectly intolerable; and it was with a mischievous eagerness and satisfaction that he offered Clavering the little pecuniary aid which the lat-

ter according to his custom solicited; and supplied him with the means of taking flight from his own house.

Besides, our ingenious friend had to ingratiate himself with the townspeople of Clavering, and with the voters of the borough which he hoped to represent; and he set himself to this task with only the more eagerness, remembering how unpopular he had before been in Clavering, and determined to vanquish the odium which he had inspired amongst the simple people there. His sense of humour made him delight in this task. Naturally rather reserved and silent in public, he became on a sudden as frank, easy, and jovial, as Captain Strong. He laughed with everybody who would exchange a laugh with him, shook hands right and left, with what may be certainly called a dexterous cordiality; made his appearance at the market-day and the farmers' ordinary; and, in fine, acted like a consummate hypocrite, and as gentlemen of the highest birth and most spotless integrity act when they wish to make themselves agreeable to their constituents, and have some end to gain of the country folks. How is it that we allow ourselves not to be deceived, but to be ingratiated so readily by a glib tongue, a ready laugh, and a frank manner? We know, for the most part, that it is false coin, and we take it: we know that it is flattery, which it costs nothing to distribute to everybody, and we had rather have it than be without it. Friend Pen went about at Clavering, laboriously simple and adroitly pleased, and quite a different being from the scornful and rather sulky young dandy whom the inhabitants remembered ten years ago.

The Rectory was shut up. Doctor Portman was gone, with his gout and his family, to Harrogate; an event which Pen deplored very much in a letter to the

Doctor, in which, in a few kind and simple words, he expressed his regret at not seeing his old friend, whose

advice he wanted and whose aid he might require some day: but Pen consoled himself for the Doctor's absence, by making acquaintance with Mr. Simcoe, the opposition preacher, and with the two partners of the cloth-

factory at Chatteris, and with the Independent preacher there, all of whom he met at the Clavering Athenæum, which the Liberal party had set up in accordance with the advanced spirit of the age, and perhaps in opposition to the aristocratic old reading-room, into which the "Edinburgh Review" had once scarcely got an admission, and where no tradesmen were allowed an entrance. He propitiated the younger partner of the cloth-factory, by asking him to dine in a friendly way at the Park; he complimented the Honourable Mrs. Simcoe with hares and partridges from the same quarter, and a request to read her husband's last sermon; and being a little unwell one day, the rascal took advantage of the circumstance to show his tongue to Mr. Huxter, who sent him medicines and called the next morning. How delighted old Pendennis would have been with his pupil! Pen himself was amused with the sport in which he was engaged, and his success inspired him with a wicked good-humour.

And yet, as he walked out of Clavering of a night, after "presiding" at a meeting of the Athenæum, or working through an evening with Mrs. Simcoe, who, with her husband, was awed by the young Londoner's reputation, and had heard of his social successes; as he passed over the old familiar bridge of the rushing Brawl, and heard that well-remembered sound of waters beneath, and saw his own cottage of Fairoaks among the trees, their darkling outlines clear against the starlit sky, different thoughts no doubt came to the young man's mind, and awakened pangs of grief and shame there. There still used to be a light in the windows of the room which he remembered so well, and in which the Saint who loved him had passed so many hours of care

and yearning and prayer. He turned away his gaze from the faint light which seemed to pursue him with its wan reproachful gaze, as though it was his mother's spirit watching and warning. How clear the night was! How keen the stars shone; how ceaseless the rush of the flowing waters; the old home trees whispered, and waved gently their dark heads and branches over the cottage roof. Yonder, in the faint starlight glimmer, was the terrace where, as a boy, he walked of summer evenings, ardent and trustful, unspotted, untried, ignorant of doubts or passions; sheltered as yet from the world's contamination in the pure and anxious bosom of love. . . . The clock of the near town tolling midnight, with a clang, disturbs our wanderer's reverie, and sends him onwards towards his night's resting-place, through the lodge into Clavering avenue, and under the dark arcades of the rustling limes.

When he sees the cottage the next time, it is smiling in sunset; those bedroom windows are open where the light was burning the night before; and Pen's tenant, Captain Stokes, of the Bombay Artillery (whose mother, old Mrs. Stokes, lives in Clavering), receives his landlord's visit with great cordiality: shows him over the grounds and the new pond he has made in the back garden from the stables; talks to him confidentially about the roof and chimneys, and begs Mr. Pendennis to name a day when he will do himself and Mrs. Stokes the pleasure to, &c. Pen, who has been a fortnight in the country, excuses himself for not having called sooner upon the Captain by frankly owning that he had not the heart to do it. "I understand you, sir," the Captain says; and Mrs. Stokes, who had slipped away at the ring of the bell (how odd it seemed to Pen to ring the

bell!), comes down in her best gown, surrounded by her children. The young ones clamber about Stokes: the boy jumps into an arm-chair. It was Pen's father's arm-chair; and Arthur remembers the days when he would as soon have thought of mounting the king's throne as of seating himself in that arm-chair. He asks Miss Stokes—she is the very image of her mamma—if she can play? He should like to hear a tune on that piano. She plays. He hears the notes of the old piano once more, enfeebled by age, but he does not listen to the player. He is listening to Laura singing as in the days of their youth, and sees his mother bending and beating time over the shoulder of the girl.

The dinner at Fairoaks given in Pen's honour by his tenant, and at which old Mrs. Stokes, Captain Glanders, Squire Hobnell, and the clergyman and his lady, from Tinckleton, were present, was very stupid and melancholy for Pen, until the waiter from Clavering (who aided the Captain's stable-boy and Mrs. Stokes's butler), whom Pen remembered as a street boy, and who was now indeed barber in that place, dropped a plate over Pen's shoulder, on which Mr. Hobnell (who also employed him) remarked, "I suppose, Hodson, your hands are slippery with bear's-grease. He's always dropping the crockery about, that Hodson is—haw, haw!" On which Hodson blushed, and looked so disconcerted, that Pen burst out laughing; and good-humour and hilarity were the order of the evening. For the second course, there was a hare and partridges top and bottom, and when after the withdrawal of the servants Pen said to the Vicar of Tinckleton, "I think, Mr. Stooks, you should have asked Hodson to *cut the hare,*" the joke was taken instantly by the clergyman,

who was followed in the course of a few minutes by Captains Stokes and Glanders, and by Mr. Hobnell, who arrived rather late, but with an immense guffaw.

While Mr. Pen was engaged in the country in the above schemes, it happened that the lady of his choice, if not of his affections, came up to London from the Tunbridge villa bound upon shopping expeditions or important business, and in company of old Mrs. Bonner, her mother's maid, who had lived and quarrelled with Blanche many times since she was an infant, and who now being about to quit Lady Clavering's service for the hymeneal state, was anxious like a good soul to bestow some token of respectful kindness upon her old and young mistress before she quitted them altogether, to take her post as the wife of Lightfoot, and landlady of the " Clavering Arms."

The honest woman took the benefit of Miss Amory's taste to make the purchase which she intended to offer her ladyship; and requested the fair Blanche to choose something for herself that should be to her liking, and remind her of her old nurse who had attended her through many a wakeful night, and eventful teething, and childish fever, and who loved her like a child of her own a'most. These purchases were made, and as the nurse insisted on buying an immense Bible for Blanche, the young lady suggested that Bonner should purchase a large " Johnson's Dictionary " for her mamma. Each of the two women might certainly profit by the present made to her.

Then Mrs. Bonner invested money in some bargains in linen-drapery, which might be useful at the " Clavering Arms," and bought a red and yellow neck-hand-

kerchief, which Blanche could see at once was intended for Mr. Lightfoot. Younger than herself by at least five-and-twenty years, Mrs. Bonner regarded that youth with a fondness at once parental and conjugal,

and loved to lavish ornaments on his person, which already glittered with pins, rings, shirt-studs, and chains and seals, purchased at the good creature's expense.

It was in the Strand that Mrs. Bonner made her purchases, aided by Miss Blanche, who liked the fun very well, and when the old lady had bought everything that she desired, and was leaving the shop, Blanche, with a

smiling face, and a sweet bow to one of the shopmen, said, "Pray, sir, will you have the kindness to show us the way to Shepherd's Inn."

Shepherd's Inn was but a few score of yards off, Oldcastle Street was close by, the elegant young shopman pointed out the turning which the young lady was to take, and she and her companion walked off together.

"Shepherd's Inn! what can you want in Shepherd's Inn, Miss Blanche?" Bonner inquired. "Mr. Strong lives there. Do you want to go and see the Captain?"

"I should like to see the Captain very well. I like the Captain; but it is not him I want. I want to see a dear little good girl, who was very kind to—to Mr. Arthur when he was so ill last year, and saved his life almost; and I want to thank her, and ask her if she would like anything. I looked out several of my dresses on purpose this morning, Bonner!" and she looked at Bonner as if she had a right to admiration, and had performed an act of remarkable virtue. Blanche, indeed, was very fond of sugar-plums; she would have fed the poor upon them, when she had had enough, and given a country-girl a ball dress when she had worn it and was tired of it.

"Pretty girl—pretty young woman!" mumbled Mrs. Bonner. "I know *I* want no pretty young women to come about Lightfoot," and in imagination she peopled the "Clavering Arms" with a harem of the most hideous chambermaids and barmaids.

Blanche, with pink and blue, and feathers, and flowers, and trinkets, and a shot silk dress, and a wonderful mantle, and a charming parasol, presented a vision of elegance and beauty such as bewildered the eyes of Mrs. Bolton, who was scrubbing the lodge-floor of Shepherd's

Inn, and caused Betsy-Jane and Ameliar-Ann to look with delight.

Blanche looked on them with a smile of ineffable sweetness and protection; like Rowena going to see Rebecca; like Marie Antoinette visiting the poor in the famine; like the Marchioness of Carabas alighting from her carriage and four at a pauper-tenant's door, and taking from John No. II., the packet of Epsom salts for the invalid's benefit, carrying it with her own imperial hand into the sick-room—Blanche felt a queen stepping down from her throne to visit a subject, and enjoyed all the bland consciousness of doing a good action.

"My good woman! I want to see Fanny—Fanny Bolton; is she here?"

Mrs. Bolton had a sudden suspicion, from the splendour of Blanche's appearance, that it must be a play-actor, or something worse.

"What do you want with Fanny, pray?" she asked.

"I am Lady Clavering's daughter—you have heard of Sir Francis Clavering? And I wish very much indeed to see Fanny Bolton."

"Pray step in, Miss—Betsy-Jane, where's Fanny?"

Betsy-Jane said Fanny had gone into No. 3 staircase, on which Mrs. Bolton said she was probably in Strong's rooms, and bade the child go and see if she was there.

"In Captain Strong's rooms! oh, let us go to Captain Strong's rooms," cried out Miss Blanche. "I know him very well. You dearest little girl, show us the way to Captain Strong!" cried out Miss Blanche, for the floor reeked with the recent scrubbing, and the goddess did not like the smell of brown-soap.

And as they passed up the stairs, a gentleman by the

Rowena's visit to Rebecca

name of Costigan, who happened to be swaggering about the court, and gave a very knowing look with his "oi" under Blanche's bonnet, remarked to himself, "That's a devilish foine gyurll, bedad, goan' up to Sthrong and Altamont: they're always having foine gyurlls up their stairs."

"Hallo—hwhat's that?" he presently said, looking up at the windows: from which some piercing shrieks issued.

At the sound of the voice of a distressed female the intrepid Cos rushed up the stairs as fast as his old legs would carry him, being nearly overthrown by Strong's servant, who was descending the stair. Cos found the outer door of Strong's chambers open, and began to thunder at the knocker. After many and fierce knocks, the inner door was partially unclosed, and Strong's head appeared.

"It's oi, me boy. Hwhat's that noise, Sthrong?" asked Costigan.

"Go to the d—" was the only answer, and the door was shut on Cos's venerable red nose: and he went down stairs muttering threats at the indignity offered to him, and vowing that he would have satisfaction. In the meanwhile the reader, more lucky than Captain Costigan, will have the privilege of being made acquainted with the secret which was withheld from that officer.

It has been said of how generous a disposition Mr. Altamont was, and when he was well supplied with funds, how liberally he spent them. Of a hospitable turn, he had no greater pleasure than drinking in company with other people; so that there was no man more

welcome at Greenwich and Richmond than the Emissary of the Nawaub of Lucknow.

Now it chanced that on the day when Blanche and Mrs. Bonner ascended the staircase to Strong's room in Shepherd's Inn, the Colonel had invited Miss Delaval of the —— Theatre Royal, and her mother, Mrs. Hodge, to a little party down the river, and it had been agreed that they were to meet at Chambers, and thence walk down to a port in the neighbouring Strand to take water. So that when Mrs. Bonner and Mes Larmes came to the door, where Grady, Altamont's servant, was standing, the domestic said, "Walk in, ladies," with the utmost affability, and led them into the room, which was arranged as if they had been expected there. Indeed, two bouquets of flowers, bought at Covent Garden that morning, and instances of the tender gallantry of Altamont, were awaiting his guests upon the table. Blanche smelt at the bouquet, and put her pretty little dainty nose into it, and tripped about the room, and looked behind the curtains, and at the books and prints, and at the plan of Clavering estate hanging up on the wall; and had asked the servant for Captain Strong, and had almost forgotten his existence and the errand about which she had come, namely, to visit Fanny Bolton; so pleased was she with the new adventure, and the odd, strange, delightful, droll little idea of being in a bachelor's chambers in a queer old place in the City!

Grady meanwhile, with a pair of ample varnished boots, had disappeared into his master's room. Blanche had hardly the leisure to remark how big the boots were, and how unlike Mr. Strong's.

"The women's come," said Grady, helping his master to the boots.

"Did you ask 'em if they would take a glass of anything?" asked Altamont.

Grady came out—"He says, will you take anything to drink?" the domestic asked of them; at which Blanche, amused with the artless question, broke out into a pretty little laugh, and asked of Mrs. Bonner, "Shall we take anything to drink?"

"Well, you may take it or lave it," said Mr. Grady, who thought his offer slighted, and did not like the contemptuous manners of the new-comers, and so left them.

"Will we take anything to drink?" Blanche asked again: and again began to laugh.

"Grady," bawled out a voice from the chamber within:—a voice that made Mrs. Bonner start.

Grady did not answer: his song was heard from afar off, from the kitchen, his upper room, where Grady was singing at his work.

"Grady, my coat!" again roared the voice from within.

"Why, that is not Mr. Strong's voice," said the Sylphide, still half laughing. "Grady my coat!—Bonner, who is Grady my coat? We ought to go away."

Bonner still looked quite puzzled at the sound of the voice which she had heard.

The bedroom door here opened, and the individual who had called out "Grady, my coat," appeared without the garment in question.

He nodded to the women, and walked across the room. "I beg your pardon, ladies. Grady, bring my coat down, sir! Well, my dears, it's a fine day, and we'll have a jolly lark at—"

He said no more; for here Mrs. Bonner, who had been looking at him with scared eyes, suddenly shrieked out,

"Amory! Amory!" and fell back screaming and fainting in her chair.

The man, so apostrophised, looked at the woman an instant, and, rushing up to Blanche, seized her and kissed her. "Yes, Betsy," he said, "by G— it is me. Mary Bonner knew me. What a fine gal we've grown! But it's a secret, mind. I'm dead, though I'm your father. Your poor mother don't know it. What a pretty gal we've grown! Kiss me—kiss me close, my Betsy! D— it, I love you: I'm your old father."

Betsy or Blanche looked quite bewildered, and began to scream too—once, twice, thrice; and it was her piercing shrieks which Captain Costigan heard as he walked the court below.

At the sound of these shrieks the perplexed parent clasped his hands (his wristbands were open, and on one brawny arm you could see letters tattooed in blue), and, rushing to his apartment, came back with an eau-de-Cologne bottle from his grand silver dressing-case, with the fragrant contents of which he began liberally to sprinkle Bonner and Blanche.

The screams of these women brought the other occupants of the chambers into the room: Grady from his kitchen, and Strong from his apartment in the upper story. The latter at once saw from the aspect of the two women what had occurred.

"Grady, go and wait in the court," he said, "and if anybody comes—you understand me."

"Is it the play-actress and her mother?" said Grady.

"Yes—confound you—say that there's nobody in chambers, and the party's off for to-day."

"Shall I say that, sir? and after I bought them bokays?" asked Grady of his master.

A Recognition

"Yes," said Amory, with a stamp of his foot; and Strong going to the door, too, reached it just in time to prevent the entrance of Captain Costigan, who had mounted the stair.

The ladies from the theatre did not have their treat to Greenwich, nor did Blanche pay her visit to Fanny Bolton on that day. And Cos, who took occasion majestically to inquire of Grady what the mischief was, and who was crying?—had for answer that 'twas a woman, another of them, and that they were, in Grady's opinion, the cause of 'most all the mischief in the world.

CHAPTER LXVI

IN WHICH PEN BEGINS TO DOUBT HIS ELECTION

WHILST Pen, in his own county, was thus carrying on his selfish plans and parliamentary schemes, news came to him that Lady Rockminster had arrived at Baymouth, and had brought with her our friend Laura. At the announcement that Laura his sister was near him, Pen felt rather guilty. His wish was to stand higher in her esteem, perhaps, than in that of any other person in the world. She was his mother's legacy to him. He was to be her patron and protector in some sort. How would she brave the news which he had to tell her; and how should he explain the plans which he was meditating? He felt as if neither he nor Blanche could bear Laura's dazzling glance of calm scrutiny, and as if he would not dare to disclose his worldly hopes and ambitions to that spotless judge. At her arrival at Baymouth, he wrote a letter thither which contained a great number of fine phrases and protests of affection, and a great deal of easy satire and raillery; in the midst of all which Mr. Pen could not help feeling that he was in a panic, and that he was acting like a rogue and hypocrite.

How was it that a simple country-girl should be the object of fear and trembling to such an accomplished gentleman as Mr. Pen? His worldly tactics and diplomacy, his satire and knowledge of the world, could not bear the test of her purity, he felt somehow. And he had to own to himself that his affairs were in such a position, that he could not tell the truth to that honest soul. As he rode from Clavering to Baymouth he felt as guilty as a school-boy, who doesn't know his lesson and is about to face the awful master. For is not truth the master always, and does she not have the power and hold the book?

Under the charge of her kind, though somewhat wayward and absolute patroness, Lady Rockminster, Laura had seen somewhat of the world in the last year, had gathered some accomplishments, and profited by the lessons of society. Many a girl who had been accustomed to that too great tenderness in which Laura's early life had been passed, would have been unfitted for the changed existence which she now had to lead. Helen worshipped her two children, and thought, as home-bred women will, that all the world was made for them, or to be considered after them. She tended Laura with a watchfulness of affection which never left her. If she had a headache, the widow was as alarmed as if there had never been an aching head before in the world. She slept and woke, read, and moved under her mother's fond superintendence, which was now withdrawn from her, along with the tender creature whose anxious heart would beat no more. And painful moments of grief and depression no doubt Laura had, when she stood in the great careless world alone. Nobody heeded her griefs or her solitude. She was not quite the

equal, in social rank, of the lady whose companion she was, or of the friends and relatives of the imperious, but kind old dowager. Some very likely bore her no good-will—some, perhaps, slighted her: it might have been that servants were occasionally rude; their mistress certainly was often. Laura not seldom found herself in family meetings, the confidence and familiarity of which she felt were interrupted by her intrusion; and her sensitiveness of course was wounded at the idea that she should give or feel this annoyance. How many governesses are there in the world, thought cheerful Laura,—how many ladies, whose necessities make them slaves and companions by profession! What bad tempers and coarse unkindness have not these to encounter! How infinitely better my lot is with these really kind and affectionate people than that of thousands of unprotected girls! It was with this cordial spirit that our young lady adapted herself to her new position; and went in advance of her fortune with a trustful smile.

Did you ever know a person who met Fortune in that way, whom the goddess did not regard kindly? Are not even bad people won by a constant cheerfulness and a pure and affectionate heart? When the babes in the wood, in the ballad, looked up fondly and trustfully at those notorious rogues whom their uncle had set to make away with the little folks, we all know how one of the rascals relented, and made away with the other—not having the heart to be cruel to so much innocence and beauty. Oh, happy they who have that virgin loving trust and sweet smiling confidence in the world, and fear no evil because they think none! Miss Laura Bell was one of these fortunate persons; and besides the gentle widow's little cross, which, as we have seen, Pen gave

her, had such a sparkling and brilliant *kohinoor* in her bosom, as is even more precious than that famous jewel; for it not only fetches a price, and is retained by its owner in another world where diamonds are stated to be of no value, but here, too, is of inestimable worth to its possessor; is a talisman against evil, and lightens up the darkness of life, like Cogia Hassan's famous stone.

So that before Miss Bell had been a year in Lady Rockminster's house, there was not a single person in it whose love she had not won by the use of this talisman. From the old lady to the lowest dependent of her bounty, Laura had secured the good-will of everybody. With a mistress of such a temper, my Lady's woman (who had endured her mistress for forty years, and had been clawed and scolded and gibed every day and night in that space of time) could not be expected to have a good temper of her own; and was at first angry against Miss Laura, as she had been against her ladyship's fifteen preceding companions. But when Laura was ill at Paris, this old woman nursed her in spite of her mistress, who was afraid of catching the fever, and absolutely fought for her medicine with Martha from Fairoaks, now advanced to be Miss Laura's own maid. As she was recovering, Grandjean the *chef* wanted to kill her by the number of delicacies which he dressed for her, and wept when she ate her first slice of chicken. The Swiss major-domo of the house celebrated Miss Bell's praises in almost every European language, which he spoke with indifferent incorrectness; the coachman was happy to drive her out; the page cried when he heard she was ill; and Calverley and Coldstream (those two footmen, so large, so calm ordinarily, and so difficult to move) broke out into extraordinary hilarity at the news

of her convalescence, and intoxicated the page at a wine-shop to *fête* Laura's recovery. Even Lady Diana Pynsent (our former acquaintance Mr. Pynsent had married by this time), who had had a considerable dislike to Laura for some time, was so enthusiastic as to say that she thought Miss Bell was a very agreeable person, and that grandmamma had a great *trouvaille* in her. All this kindness Laura had acquired, not by any arts, not by any flattery, but by the simple force of good-nature, and by the blessed gift of pleasing and being pleased.

On the one or two occasions when he had seen Lady Rockminster, the old lady, who did not admire him, had been very pitiless and abrupt with our young friend, and perhaps Pen expected when he came to Baymouth to find Laura installed in her house in the quality of humble companion, and treated no better than himself. When she heard of his arrival she came running down stairs, and I am not sure that she did not embrace him in the presence of Calverley and Coldstream: not that those gentlemen ever told: if the *fractus orbis* had come to a smash, if Laura, instead of kissing Pen, had taken her scissors and snipped off his head—Calverley and Coldstream would have looked on impavidly, without allowing a grain of powder to be disturbed by the calamity.

Laura had so much improved in health and looks that Pen could not but admire her. The frank eyes which met his beamed with good health; the cheek which he kissed blushed with beauty. As he looked at her, artless and graceful, pure and candid, he thought he had never seen her so beautiful. Why should he remark her beauty now so much, and remark too to himself that he

had not remarked it sooner? He took her fair trustful hand and kissed it fondly: he looked in her bright clear eyes, and read in them that kindling welcome which he was always sure to find there. He was affected and touched by the tender tone and the pure sparkling glance; their innocence smote him somehow and moved him.

"How good you are to me, Laura—sister!" said Pen, "I don't deserve that you should—that you should be so kind to me."

"Mamma left you to me," she said, stooping down and brushing his forehead with her lips hastily. "You know you were to come to me when you were in trouble, or to tell me when you were very happy: that was our compact, Arthur, last year, before we parted. Are you very happy now, or are you in trouble, which is it?" and she looked at him with an arch glance. "Do you like going into Parliament? Do you intend to distinguish yourself there? How I shall tremble for your first speech!"

"Do you know about the Parliament plan, then?" Pen asked.

"Know?—all the world knows! I have heard it talked about many times. Lady Rockminster's doctor talked about it to-day. I dare say it will be in the Chatteris paper to-morrow. It is all over the county that Sir Francis Clavering, of Clavering, is going to retire, in behalf of Mr. Arthur Pendennis, of Fairoaks; and that the young and beautiful Miss Blanche Amory is—"

"What! that too?" asked Pendennis.

"That, too, dear Arthur. *Tout se sait,* as somebody would say, whom I intend to be very fond of; and who I am sure is very clever and pretty. I have had a letter

from Blanche: The kindest of letters. She speaks so warmly of you, Arthur! I hope—I know she feels what she writes.—When is it to be, Arthur? Why did you not tell me? I may come and live with you then, mayn't I?"

"My home is yours, dear Laura, and everything I have," Pen said. "If I did not tell you, it was because—because—I do not know: nothing is decided yet. No words have passed between us. But you think Blanche could be happy with me—don't you? Not a romantic fondness, you know. I have no heart, I think; I've told her so: only a sober-sided attachment:—and want my wife on one side of the fire and my sister on the other,—Parliament in the session and Fairoaks in the holidays, and my Laura never to leave me until somebody who has a right comes to take her away."

Somebody who has a right—somebody with a right! Why did Pen, as he looked at the girl and slowly uttered the words, begin to feel angry and jealous of the invisible somebody with the right to take her away? Anxious, but a minute ago, how she would take the news regarding his probable arrangements with Blanche, Pen was hurt somehow that she received the intelligence so easily, and took his happiness for granted.

"Until somebody comes," Laura said, with a laugh, "I will stay at home and be aunt Laura, and take care of the children when Blanche is in the world. I have arranged it all. I am an excellent housekeeper. Do you know I have been to market at Paris with Mrs. Beck, and have taken some lessons from M. Grandjean? And I have had some lessons in Paris in singing too, with the money which you sent me, you kind boy: and I can sing much better now: and I have learned to

dance, though not so well as Blanche, and when you become a Minister of State, Blanche shall present me: " and with this, and with a provoking good-humour, she performed for him the last Parisian curtsey.

Lady Rockminster came in whilst this curtsey was being performed, and gave to Arthur one finger to shake; which he took, and over which he bowed as well as he could, which, in truth, was very clumsily.

" So you are going to be married, sir," said the old lady.

" Scold him, Lady Rockminster, for not telling us," Laura said, going away: which, in truth, the old lady began instantly to do. " So you are going to marry, and to go into Parliament in place of that good-for-nothing Sir Francis Clavering. I wanted him to give my grandson his seat—why did he not give my grandson his seat? I hope you are to have a great deal of money with Miss Amory. *I* wouldn't take her without a great deal."

" Sir Francis Clavering is tired of Parliament," Pen said, wincing, " and—and I rather wish to attempt that career. The rest of the story is at least premature."

" I wonder, when you had Laura at home, you could take up with such an affected little creature as that," the old lady continued.

" I am very sorry Miss Amory does not please your ladyship," said Pen, smiling.

" You mean—that it is no affair of mine, and that I am not going to marry her. Well, I'm not, and I'm very glad I am not—a little odious thing—when I think that a man could prefer her to my Laura, I've no patience with him, and so I tell you, Mr. Arthur Pendennis."

"I am very glad you see Laura with such favourable eyes," Pen said.

"You are very glad, and you are very sorry. What does it matter, sir, whether you are very glad or very sorry? A young man who prefers Miss Amory to Miss Bell has no business to be sorry or glad. A young man who takes up with such a crooked lump of affectation as that little Amory,—for she is crooked, I tell you she is,—after seeing my Laura, has no right to hold up his head again. Where is your friend Bluebeard? The tall young man, I mean,—Warrington, isn't his name? Why does he not come down, and marry Laura? What do the young men mean by not marrying such a girl as that? They all marry for money now. You are all selfish and cowards. We ran away with each other, and made foolish matches in my time. I have no patience with the young men! When I was at Paris in the winter, I asked all the three attachés at the Embassy why they did not fall in love with Miss Bell? They laughed —they said they wanted money. You are all selfish— you are all cowards."

"I hope before you offered Miss Bell to the attachés," said Pen, with some heat, "you did her the favour to consult her?"

"Miss Bell has only a little money. Miss Bell must marry soon. Somebody must make a match for her, sir; and a girl can't offer herself," said the old dowager, with great state. "Laura, my dear, I've been telling your cousin that all the young men are selfish; and that there is not a pennyworth of romance left among them. He is as bad as the rest."

"Have you been asking Arthur why he won't marry me?" said Laura, with a smile, coming back and taking

her cousin's hand. (She had been away, perhaps, to hide some traces of emotion, which she did not wish others to see.) "He is going to marry somebody else; and I intend to be very fond of her, and to go and live with them, provided he then does not ask every bachelor who comes to his house, why he does not marry me?"

The terrors of Pen's conscience being thus appeased, and his examination before Laura over without any reproaches on the part of the latter, Pen began to find that his duty and inclination led him constantly to Baymouth, where Lady Rockminster informed him that a place was always reserved for him at her table. "And I recommend you to come often," the old lady said, "for Grandjean is an excellent cook, and to be with Laura and me will do your manners good. It is easy to see that you are always thinking about yourself. Don't blush and stammer—almost all young men are always thinking about themselves. My sons and grandsons always were until I cured them. Come here, and let us teach you to behave properly; you will not have to carve, that is done at the side-table. Hecker will give you as much wine as is good for you; and on days when you are very good and amusing you shall have some champagne. Hecker, mind what I say. Mr. Pendennis is Miss Laura's brother; and you will make him comfortable, and see that he does not have too much wine, or disturb me whilst I am taking my nap after dinner. You are selfish: I intend to cure you of being selfish. You will dine here when you have no other engagements; and if it rains, you had better put up at the hotel." As long as the good lady could order everybody round about her, she was not hard to please;

and all the slaves and subjects of her little dowager court trembled before her, but loved her.

She did not receive a very numerous or brilliant society. The doctor, of course, was admitted, as a constant and faithful visitor; the vicar and his curate; and on public days the vicar's wife and daughters, and some of the season visitors at Baymouth were received at the old lady's entertainments: but generally the company was a small one, and Mr. Arthur drank his wine by himself, when Lady Rockminster retired to take her doze, and to be played and sung to sleep by Laura after dinner.

"If my music can give her a nap," said the good-natured girl, "ought I not to be very glad that I can do so much good? Lady Rockminster sleeps very little of night: and I used to read to her until I fell ill at Paris, since when she will not hear of my sitting up."

"Why did you not write to me when you were ill?" asked Pen, with a blush.

"What good could you do me? I had Martha to nurse me: and the doctor every day. You are too busy to write to women or to think about them. You have your books and your newspapers, and your politics and your railroads to occupy you. I wrote when I was well."

And Pen looked at her, and blushed again, as he remembered that, during all the time of her illness, he had never written to her, and had scarcely thought about her.

In consequence of his relationship, Pen was free to walk and ride with his cousin constantly, and in the course of those walks and rides, could appreciate the sweet frankness of her disposition, and the truth, simplicity, and kindliness of her fair and spotless heart,

In their mother's life-time, she had never spoken so openly or so cordially as now. The desire of poor Helen to make a union between her two children, had caused a reserve on Laura's part towards Pen; for which, under the altered circumstances of Arthur's life, there was now no necessity. He was engaged to another woman; and Laura became his sister at once,—hiding, or banishing from herself, any doubts which she might have as to his choice; striving to look cheerfully forward, and hope for his prosperity; promising herself to do all that affection might do to make her mother's darling happy.

Their talk was often about the departed mother. And it was from a thousand stories which Laura told him that Arthur was made aware how constant and absorbing that silent maternal devotion had been; which had accompanied him present and absent through life, and had only ended with the fond widow's last breath. One day the people in Clavering saw a lad in charge of a couple of horses at the churchyard-gate: and it was told over the place that Pen and Laura had visited Helen's grave together. Since Arthur had come down into the country, he had been there once or twice: but the sight of the sacred stone had brought no consolation to him. A guilty man doing a guilty deed: a mere speculator, content to lay down his faith and honour for a fortune and a worldly career; and owning that his life was but a contemptible surrender —what right had he in the holy place?—what booted it to him that others in the world he lived in were no better than himself? Arthur and Laura rode by the gates of Fairoaks; and he shook hands with his tenant's children, playing on the lawn and the terrace—Laura looked steadily at the cottage wall, at the creeper on the

porch and the magnolia growing up to her window. "Mr. Pendennis rode by to-day," one of the boys told his mother, "with a lady, and he stopped and talked to us, and he asked for a bit of honeysuckle off the porch, and gave it the lady. I couldn't see if she was pretty; she had her veil down. She was riding one of Cramp's horses, out of Baymouth."

As they rode over the downs between home and Baymouth, Pen did not speak much, though they rode very close together. He was thinking what a mockery life was, and how men refuse happiness when they may have it; or, having it, kick it down; or barter it, with their eyes open, for a little worthless money or beggarly honour. And then the thought came, what does it matter for the little space? The lives of the best and purest of us are consumed in a vain desire, and end in a disappointment: as the dear soul's who sleeps in her grave yonder. She had her selfish ambition, as much as Cæsar had; and died, baulked of her life's longing. The stone covers over our hopes and our memories. Our place knows us not. "Other people's children are playing on the grass," he broke out, in a hard voice, "where you and I used to play, Laura. And you see how the magnolia we planted has grown up since our time. I have been round to one or two of the cottages where my mother used to visit. It is scarcely more than a year that she is gone, and the people whom she used to benefit care no more for her death than for Queen Anne's. We are all selfish: the world is selfish: there are but a few exceptions, like you, my dear, to shine like good deeds in a naughty world, and make the blackness more dismal."

"I wish you would not speak in that way, Arthur," said Laura, looking down and bending her head to the honeysuckle on her breast. "When you told the little boy to give me this, you were not selfish."

"A pretty sacrifice I made to get it for you!" said the sneerer.

"But your heart was kind and full of love when you did so. One cannot ask for more than love and kindness; and if you think humbly of yourself, Arthur, the love and kindness are not diminished—are they? I often thought our dearest mother spoilt you at home, by worshipping you; and that if you are—I hate the word—what you say, her too great fondness helped to make you so. And as for the world, when men go out into it, I suppose they cannot be otherwise than selfish. You have to fight for yourself, and to get on for yourself, and to make a name for yourself. Mamma and your uncle both encouraged you in this ambition. If it is a vain thing, why pursue it? I suppose such a clever man as you intend to do a great deal of good to the country, by going into Parliament, or you would not wish to be there. What are you going to do when you are in the House of Commons?"

"Women don't understand about politics, my dear," Pen said, sneering at himself as he spoke.

"But why don't you make us understand? I could never tell about Mr. Pynsent why he should like to be there so much. He is not a clever man—"

"He certainly is not a genius, Pynsent," said Pen.

"Lady Diana says that he attends Committees all day; that then again he is at the House all night; that he always votes as he is told; that he never speaks; that he will never get on beyond a subordinate place, and, as

his grandmother tells him, he is choked with red-tape. Are you going to follow the same career, Arthur? What is there in it so brilliant that you should be so eager for it? I would rather that you should stop at home, and write books—good books, kind books, with gentle kind thoughts, such as you have, dear Arthur, and such as might do people good to read. And if you do not win fame, what then? You own it is vanity, and you can live very happily without it. I must not pretend to advise: but I take you at your own word about the world; and as you own it is wicked, and that it tires you, ask you why you don't leave it?"

"And what would you have me do?" asked Arthur.

"I would have you bring your wife to Fairoaks to live there, and study, and do good round about you. I would like to see your own children playing on the lawn, Arthur, and that we might pray in our mother's church again once more, dear brother. If the world is a temptation, are we not told to pray that we may not be led into it?"

"Do you think Blanche would make a good wife for a petty country gentleman? Do you think I should become the character very well, Laura?" Pen asked. "Remember temptation walks about the hedgerows as well as the city streets: and idleness is the greatest tempter of all."

"What does—does Mr. Warrington say?" said Laura, as a blush mounted up to her cheek, and of which Pen saw the fervour, though Laura's veil fell over her face to hide it.

Pen rode on by Laura's side silently for a while. George's name so mentioned brought back the past to him, and the thoughts which he had once had regarding

George and Laura. Why should the recurrence of the thought agitate him, now that he knew the union was impossible? Why should he be curious to know if, during the months of their intimacy, Laura had felt a regard for Warrington? From that day until the present time George had never alluded to his story, and Arthur remembered now that since then George had scarcely ever mentioned Laura's name.

At last he came close to her. "Tell me something, Laura," he said.

She put back her veil and looked at him. "What is it, Arthur?" she asked—though from the tremor of her voice she guessed very well.

"Tell me—but for George's misfortune—I never knew him speak of it before or since that day—would you—would you have given him—what you refused me?"

"Yes, Pen," she said, bursting into tears.

"He deserved you better than I did," poor Arthur groaned forth, with an indescribable pang at his heart. "I am but a selfish wretch, and George is better, nobler, truer, than I am. God bless him!"

"Yes, Pen," said Laura, reaching out her hand to her cousin, and he put his arm round her, and for a moment she sobbed on his shoulder.

The gentle girl had had her secret, and told it. In the widow's last journey from Fairoaks, when hastening with her mother to Arthur's sick-bed, Laura had made a different confession; and it was only when Warrington told his own story, and described the hopeless condition of his life, that she discovered how much her feelings had changed, and with what tender sympathy, with what great respect, delight, and admiration she

had grown to regard her cousin's friend. Until she knew that some plans she might have dreamed of were impossible, and that Warrington, reading her heart, perhaps, had told his melancholy story to warn her, she had not asked herself whether it was possible that her affections could change; and had been shocked and scared by the discovery of the truth. How should she have told it to Helen, and confessed her shame? Poor Laura felt guilty before her friend, with the secret which she dared not confide to her; felt as if she had been ungrateful for Helen's love and regard; felt as if she had been wickedly faithless to Pen in withdrawing that love from him which he did not even care to accept; humbled even and repentant before Warrington, lest she should have encouraged him by undue sympathy, or shown the preference which she began to feel.

The catastrophe which broke up Laura's home, and the grief and anguish which she felt for her mother's death, gave her little leisure for thoughts more selfish; and by the time she rallied from that grief the minor one was also almost cured. It was but for a moment that she had indulged a hope about Warrington. Her admiration and respect for him remained as strong as ever. But the tender feeling with which she knew she had regarded him was schooled into such calmness, that it may be said to have been dead and passed away. The pang which it left behind was one of humility and remorse. "Oh, how wicked and proud I was about Arthur," she thought; "how self-confident and unforgiving! I never forgave from my heart this poor girl, who was fond of him, or him for encouraging her love; and I have been more guilty than she, poor, little, artless creature! I, professing to love one man, could listen to

another only too eagerly; and would not pardon the change of feelings in Arthur, whilst I myself was changing and unfaithful." And so humiliating herself and acknowledging her weakness, the poor girl sought for strength and refuge in the manner in which she had been accustomed to look for them.

She had done no wrong: but there are some folks who suffer for a fault ever so trifling as much as others whose stout consciences can walk under crimes of almost any weight; and poor Laura chose to fancy that she had acted in this delicate juncture of her life as a very great criminal. She determined that she had done Pen a great injury by withdrawing that love which, privately in her mother's hearing, she had bestowed upon him; that she had been ungrateful to her dead benefactress by ever allowing herself to think of another or of violating her promise; and that, considering her own enormous crimes, she ought to be very gentle in judging those of others, whose temptations were much greater, very likely: and whose motives she could not understand.

A year back, Laura would have been indignant at the idea that Arthur should marry Blanche: and her high spirit would have risen as she thought that from worldly motives he should stoop to one so unworthy. Now when the news was brought to her of such a chance (the intelligence was given to her by old Lady Rockminster, whose speeches were as direct and rapid as a slap on the face), the humbled girl winced a little at the blow, but bore it meekly, and with a desperate acquiescence. "He has a right to marry; he knows a great deal more of the world than I do," she argued with herself. "Blanche may not be so light-minded as she seemed, and who am I to be her judge? I dare say it is very good

that Arthur should go into Parliament and distinguish himself, and my duty is to do everything that lies in my power to aid him and Blanche, and to make his home happy. I dare say I shall live with them. If I am godmother to one of their children, I will leave her my three thousand pounds!" And forthwith she began to think what she could give Blanche out of her small treasures, and how best to conciliate her affection. She wrote her forthwith a kind letter, in which, of course, no mention was made of the plans in contemplation, but in which Laura recalled old times, and spoke her good-will, and in reply to this she received an eager answer from Blanche: in which not a word about marriage was said, to be sure, but Mr. Pendennis was mentioned two or three times in the letter, and they were to be henceforth dearest Laura, and dearest Blanche, and loving sisters, and so forth.

When Pen and Laura reached home, after Laura's confession, (Pen's noble acknowledgment of his own inferiority and generous expression of love for Warrington, causing the girl's heart to throb, and rendering doubly keen those tears which she sobbed on his shoulder), a little slim letter was awaiting Miss Bell in the hall, which she trembled rather guiltily as she unsealed, and which Pen blushed as he recognised: for he saw instantly that it was from Blanche.

Laura opened it hastily, and cast her eyes quickly over it, as Pen kept his fixed on her, blushing.

"She dates from London," Laura said. "She has been with old Bonner, Lady Clavering's maid. Bonner is going to marry Lightfoot the butler. Where do you think Blanche has been?" she cried out eagerly.

"To Paris, to Scotland, to the Casino?"

" To Shepherd's Inn, to see Fanny; but Fanny wasn't there, and Blanche is going to leave a present for her. Isn't it kind of her and thoughtful?" And she handed the letter to Pen, who read—

" ' I saw Madame Mère, who was scrubbing the room, and looked at me with very *scrubby* looks; but *la belle* Fanny was not *au logis;* and as I heard that she was in Captain Strong's apartments, Bonner and I mounted *au troisième* to see this famous beauty. Another disappointment—only the Chevalier Strong and a friend of his in the room: so we came away after all without seeing the enchanting Fanny.

" '*Je t'envoie mille et mille baisers.* When will that horrid canvassing be over? Sleeves are worn ' &c. &c. &c."

After dinner the doctor was reading the *Times.* " A young gentleman I attended when he was here some eight or nine years ago, has come into a fine fortune," the doctor said. " I see here announced the death of John Henry Foker, Esq., of Logwood Hall, at Pau, in the Pyrenees, on the 15th ult."

CHAPTER LXVII

IN WHICH THE MAJOR IS BIDDEN TO STAND AND DELIVER

ANY gentleman who has frequented the "Wheel of Fortune" public-house, where it may be remembered that Mr. James Morgan's Club was held, and where Sir Francis Clavering had an interview with Major Pendennis, is aware that there are three rooms for guests upon the ground-floor, besides the bar where the landlady sits. One is a parlour frequented by the public at large; to another room gentlemen in livery resort; and the third apartment, on the door of which "Private" is painted, is that hired by the Club of "The Confidentials," of which Messrs. Morgan and Lightfoot were members.

The noiseless Morgan had listened to the conversation between Strong and Major Pendennis at the latter's own lodgings, and had carried away from it matter for much private speculation; and a desire of knowledge had led him to follow his master when the Major came

to the "Wheel of Fortune," and to take his place quietly in the Confidential room, whilst Pendennis and Clavering had their discourse in the parlour. There was a particular corner in the Confidential room from which you could hear almost all that passed in the next apartment; and as the conversation between the two gentlemen there was rather angry, and carried on in a high key, Morgan had the benefit of overhearing almost the whole of it; and what he heard strengthened the conclusions which his mind had previously formed.

"He knew Altamont at once, did he, when he saw him in Sydney? Clavering ain't no more married to my Lady than I am! Altamont's the man: Altamont's a convick; young Harthur comes into Parlyment, and the Gov'nor promises not to split. By Jove, what a sly old rogue it is, that old Gov'nor! No wonder he's anxious to make the match between Blanche and Harthur: why, she'll have a hundred thousand if she's a penny, and bring her man a seat in Parlyment into the bargain." Nobody saw, but a physiognomist would have liked to behold, the expression of Mr. Morgan's countenance, when this astounding intelligence was made clear to him. "But for my hage, and the confounded prejudices of society," he said, surveying himself in the glass, "dammy, James Morgan, you might marry her yourself." But if he could not marry Miss Blanche and her fortune, Morgan thought he could mend his own by the possession of this information, and that it might be productive of benefit to him from very many sources. Of all the persons whom the secret affected, the greater number would not like to have it known. For instance, Sir Francis Clavering, whose fortune it involved, would wish to keep it quiet; Colonel Altamont, whose neck it

implicated, would naturally be desirous to hush it: and that young upstart beast, Mr. Harthur, who was for gettin' into Parlyment on the stren'th of it, and was as proud as if he was a duke with half a millium a year (such, we grieve to say, was Morgan's opinion of his employer's nephew), would pay anythink sooner than let the world know that he was married to a convick's daughter, and had got his seat in Parlyment by trafficking with this secret. As for Lady C., Morgan thought, if she's tired of Clavering, and wants to get rid of him, she'll pay: if she's frightened about her son, and fond of the little beggar, she'll pay all the same: and Miss Blanche will certainly come down handsome to the man who will put her into her rights, which she was unjustly defrauded of them, and no mistake. "Dammy," concluded the valet, reflecting upon this wonderful hand which luck had given him to play, "with such cards as these, James Morgan, you are a made man. It may be a reg'lar enewity to me. Every one of 'em must susscribe. And with what I've made already, I may cut business, give my old Gov'nor warning, turn gentleman, and have a servant of my own, begad." Entertaining himself with calculations such as these, that were not a little likely to perturb a man's spirit, Mr. Morgan showed a very great degree of self-command by appearing and being calm, and by not allowing his future prospects in any way to interfere with his present duties.

One of the persons whom the story chiefly concerned, Colonel Altamont, was absent from London, when Morgan was thus made acquainted with his history. The valet knew of Sir Francis Clavering's Shepherd's Inn haunt, and walked thither an hour or two after the Baronet and Pendennis had had their conversation together.

But that bird was flown; Colonel Altamont had received his Derby winnings, and was gone to the Continent. The fact of his absence was exceedingly vexatious to Mr. Morgan. "He'll drop all that money at the gambling-shops on the Rhind," thought Morgan, "and I might have had a good bit of it. It's confounded annoying to think he's gone and couldn't have waited a few days longer." Hope, triumphant or deferred, ambition or disappointment, victory or patient ambush, Morgan bore all alike, with similar equable countenance. Until the proper day came, the Major's boots were varnished and his hair was curled, his early cup of tea was brought to his bedside, his oaths, rebukes, and senile satire borne, with silent obsequious fidelity. Who would think, to see him waiting upon his master, packing and shouldering his trunks, and occasionally assisting at table, at the country-houses where he might be staying, that Morgan was richer than his employer, and knew his secrets and other people's? In the profession Mr. Morgan was greatly respected and admired, and his reputation for wealth and wisdom got him much renown at most supper-tables: the younger gentlemen voted him stoopid, a feller of no ideas, and a fogey, in a word: but not one of them would not say amen to the heartfelt prayer which some of the most serious-minded among the gentlemen uttered, "When I die may I cut up as well as Morgan Pendennis!"

As became a man of fashion, Major Pendennis spent the autumn passing from house to house of such country friends as were at home to receive him, and if the Duke happened to be abroad, or the Marquis in Scotland, condescending to sojourn with Sir John or the plain Squire.

To say the truth, the old gentleman's reputation was somewhat on the wane: many of the men of his time had died out, and the occupants of their halls and the present wearers of their titles knew not Major Pendennis; and little cared for his traditions of the wild Prince and Poins, and of the heroes of fashion passed away. It must have struck the good man with melancholy as he walked by many a London door, to think how seldom it was now opened for him, and how often he used to knock at it—to what banquets and welcome he used to pass through it—a score of years back. He began to own that he was no longer of the present age, and dimly to apprehend that the young men laughed at him. Such melancholy musings must come across many a Pall Mall philosopher. The men, thinks he, are not such as they used to be in his time: the old grand manner and courtly grace of life are gone: what is Castlewood House and the present Castlewood, compared to the magnificence of the old mansion and owner? The late lord came to London with four post-chaises and sixteen horses: all the West Road hurried out to look at his cavalcade: the people in London streets even stopped as his procession passed them. The present lord travels with five bagmen in a railway carriage, and sneaks away from the station, smoking a cigar in a brougham. The late lord in autumn filled Castlewood with company, who drank claret till midnight: the present man buries himself in a hut on a Scotch mountain, and passes November in two or three closets in an entresol at Paris, where his amusements are a dinner at a café and a box at a little theatre. What a contrast there is between *his* Lady Lorraine, the Regent's Lady Lorraine, and her little ladyship of the present era! He figures to himself the

first, beautiful, gorgeous, magnificent in diamonds and velvets, daring in rouge, the wits of the world (the old wits, the old polished gentlemen—not the *canaille* of to-day with their language of the cab-stand, and their coats smelling of smoke) bowing at her feet; and then thinks of to-day's Lady Lorraine—a little woman in a black silk gown, like a governess, who talks astronomy, and labouring classes, and emigration, and the deuce knows what, and lurks to church at eight o'clock in the morning. Abbots-Lorraine, that used to be the noblest house in the county, is turned into a monastery—a regular La Trappe. They don't drink two glasses of wine after dinner, and every other man at table is a country curate, with a white neck-cloth, whose talk is about Polly Higson's progress at school, or widow Watkins' lumbago. "And the other young men, those lounging guardsmen and great lazy dandies—sprawling over sofas and billiard-tables, and stealing off to smoke pipes in each other's bed-rooms, caring for nothing, reverencing nothing, not even an old gentleman who has known their fathers and their betters, not even a pretty woman—what a difference there is between these men who poison the very turnips and stubble-fields with their tobacco, and the gentlemen of our time!" thinks the Major; "the breed is gone—there's no use for 'em; they're replaced by a parcel of damned cotton-spinners and utilitarians, and young sprigs of parsons with their hair combed down their backs. I'm getting old; they're getting past me: they laugh at us old boys," thought old Pendennis. And he was not far wrong; the times and manners which he admired were pretty nearly gone—the gay young men "larked" him irreverently, whilst the serious youth had a grave pity and wonder at him,

which would have been even more painful to bear, had the old gentleman been aware of its extent. But he was rather simple: his examination of moral questions had never been very deep; it had never struck him perhaps, until very lately, that he was otherwise than a most respectable and rather fortunate man. Is there no old age but his without reverence? Did youthful folly never jeer at other bald pates? For the past two or three years, he had begun to perceive that his day was well nigh over, and that the men of the new time had begun to reign.

After a rather unsuccessful autumn season, then, during which he was faithfully followed by Mr. Morgan, his nephew Arthur being engaged, as we have seen, at Clavering, it happened that Major Pendennis came back for a while to London, at the dismal end of October, when the fogs and the lawyers come to town. Who has not looked with interest at those loaded cabs, piled boxes, and crowded children, rattling through the streets on the dun October evenings; stopping at the dark houses, where they discharge nurse and infant, girls, matron and father, whose holidays are over? Yesterday it was France and sunshine, or Broadstairs and liberty; to-day come work and a yellow fog; and, ye gods! what a heap of bills there lies in Master's study. And the clerk has brought the lawyer's papers from chambers; and in half an hour the literary man knows that the printer's boy will be in the passage: and Mr. Smith with that little account (that particular little account) has called presentient of your arrival, and has left word that he will call to-morrow morning at ten. Who amongst us has not said good-by to his holiday; returned to dun London, and his fate; surveyed his labours and liabilities

laid out before him, and been aware of that inevitable little account to settle? Smith and his little account in the morning, symbolise duty, difficulty, struggle, which you will meet, let us hope, friend, with a manly and honest heart.—And you think of him, as the children are slumbering once more in their own beds, and the watchful housewife tenderly pretends to sleep.

Old Pendennis had no special labours or bills to encounter on the morrow, as he had no affection at home to soothe him. He had always money in his desk sufficient for his wants; and being by nature and habit tolerably indifferent to the wants of other people, these latter were not likely to disturb him. But a gentleman may be out of temper though he does not owe a shilling: and though he may be ever so selfish, he must occasionally feel dispirited and lonely. He had had two or three twinges of gout in the country-house where he had been staying: the birds were wild and shy, and the walking over the ploughed fields had fatigued him deucedly: the young men had laughed at him, and he had been peevish at table once or twice: he had not been able to get his whist of an evening: and, in fine, was glad to come away. In all his dealings with Morgan, his valet, he had been exceedingly sulky and discontented. He had sworn at him and abused him for many days past. He had scalded his mouth with bad soup at Swindon. He had left his umbrella in the railroad carriage: at which piece of forgetfulness, he was in such a rage, that he cursed Morgan more freely than ever. Both the chimneys smoked furiously in his lodgings; and when he caused the windows to be flung open, he swore so acrimoniously, that Morgan was inclined to fling him out of window, too, through that opened casement. The valet swore after his mas-

ter, as Pendennis went down the street on his way to the Club.

Bays's was not at all pleasant. The house had been new painted, and smelt of varnish and turpentine, and a large streak of white paint inflicted itself on the back of the old boy's fur-collared surtout. The dinner was not good: and the three most odious men in all London —old Hawkshaw, whose cough and accompaniments are fit to make any man uncomfortable; old Colonel Gripley, who seizes on all the newspapers; and that irreclaimable old bore Jawkins, who would come and dine at the next table to Pendennis, and describe to him every inn-bill which he had paid in his foreign tour: each and all of these disagreeable personages and incidents had contributed to make Major Pendennis miserable; and the Club waiter trod on his toe as he brought him his coffee. Never alone appear the Immortals. The Furies always hunt in company: they pursued Pendennis from home to the Club, and from the Club home.

Whilst the Major was absent from his lodgings, Morgan had been seated in the landlady's parlour, drinking freely of hot brandy-and-water, and pouring out on Mrs. Brixham some of the abuse which he had received from his master up stairs. Mrs. Brixham was Morgan's slave. He was his landlady's landlord. He had bought the lease of the house which she rented; he had got her name and her son's to acceptances, and a bill of sale which made him master of the luckless widow's furniture. The young Brixham was a clerk in an insurance-office, and Morgan could put him into what he called quod any day. Mrs. Brixham was a clergyman's widow, and Mr. Morgan, after performing his duties on the first floor, had a pleasure in making the old lady fetch

Mr. Morgan at his ease

him his boot-jack and his slippers. She was his slave. The little black profiles of her son and daughter; the very picture of Tiddlecot Church, where she was married, and her poor dear Brixham lived and died, was now Morgan's property, as it hung there over the mantel-piece of his back-parlour. Morgan sate in the widow's back-room, in the ex-curate's old horse-hair study-chair, making Mrs. Brixham bring supper for him, and fill his glass again and again.

The liquor was bought with the poor woman's own coin, and hence Morgan indulged in it only the more freely; and he had eaten his supper and was drinking a third tumbler when old Pendennis returned from the Club, and went up stairs to his rooms. Mr. Morgan swore very savagely at him and his bell, when he heard the latter, and finished his tumbler of brandy before he went up to answer the summons.

He received the abuse consequent on this delay in silence, nor did the Major condescend to read in the flushed face and glaring eyes of the man, the anger under which he was labouring. The old gentleman's foot-bath was at the fire; his gown and slippers awaiting him there. Morgan knelt down to take his boots off with due subordination: and as the Major abused him from above, kept up a growl of maledictions below at his feet. Thus, when Pendennis was crying " Confound you, sir, mind that strap—curse you, don't wrench my foot off," Morgan *sotto voce* below was expressing a wish to strangle him, drown him, and punch his head off.

The boots removed, it became necessary to divest Mr. Pendennis of his coat: and for this purpose the valet had necessarily to approach very near to his employer;

so near that Pendennis could not but perceive what Mr. Morgan's late occupation had been; to which he adverted in that simple and forcible phraseology which men are sometimes in the habit of using to their domestics; informing Morgan that he was a drunken beast, and that he smelt of brandy.

At this the man broke out, losing patience, and flinging up all subordination, "I'm drunk, am I? I'm a beast, am I? I'm d——d, am I? you infernal old miscreant. Shall I wring your old head off, and drownd yer in that pail of water? Do you think I'm a-goin' to bear your confounded old harrogance, you old Wigsby! Chatter your old hivories at me, do you, you grinning old baboon! Come on, if you are a man, and can stand to a man. Ha! you coward, knives, knives!"

"If you advance a step I'll send it into you," said the Major, seizing up a knife that was on the table near him. "Go down stairs, you drunken brute, and leave the house; send for your book and your wages in the morning, and never let me see your insolent face again. This d——d impertinence of yours has been growing for some months past. You have been growing too rich. You are not fit for service. Get out of it, and out of the house."

"And where would you wish me to go, pray, out of the 'ouse?" asked the man, "and won't it be equal convenient to-morrow mornin'?—*tootyfay mame shose, sivvaplay, munseer?*"

"Silence, you beast, and go!" cried out the Major.

Morgan began to laugh, with rather a sinister laugh. "Look yere, Pendennis," he said, seating himself; "since I've been in this room you've called me beast, brute, dog: and d——d me, haven't you? How do you suppose one

man likes that sort of talk from another? How many years have I waited on you, and how many damns and cusses have you given me, along with my wages? Do you think a man's a dog, that you can talk to him in this way? If I choose to drink a little, why shouldn't I?

I've seen many a gentleman drunk form'ly, and per'aps have the 'abit from them. I ain't a-goin' to leave this house, old feller, and shall I tell you why? The house is my house, every stick of furnitur' in it is mine, excep' *your* old traps, and your shower-bath, and your wig-box. I've bought the place, I tell you, with my own industry and perseverance. I can show a hundred pound, where you can show a fifty, or your damned supersellious nephew either. I've served you honourable, done everythink for you these dozen years, and I'm a dog, am I? I'm a beast, am I? That's the language for gentlemen, not for our rank. But I'll bear it no more. I throw up your service; I'm tired on it; I've combed your old wig

and buckled your old girths and waistbands long enough, I tell you. Don't look savage at me, I'm sitting in my own chair, in my own room, a-telling the truth to you. I'll be your beast, and your brute, and your dog no more, Major Pendennis 'Alf Pay."

The fury of the old gentleman, met by the servant's abrupt revolt, had been shocked and cooled by the concussion, as much as if a sudden shower-bath or a pail of cold water had been flung upon him. That effect produced, and his anger calmed, Morgan's speech had interested him, and he rather respected his adversary, and his courage in facing him, as of old days, in the fencing-room, he would have admired the opponent who hit him.

"You are no longer my servant," the Major said: "and the house may be yours; but the lodgings are mine, and you will have the goodness to leave them. To-morrow morning, when we have settled our accounts, I shall remove into other quarters. In the meantime, I desire to go to bed, and have not the slightest wish for your farther company."

"*We'll* have a settlement, don't you be afraid," Morgan said, getting up from his chair. "I ain't done with you yet; nor with your family, nor with the Clavering family, Major Pendennis; and that you shall know."

"Have the goodness to leave the room, sir;—I'm tired," said the Major.

"Hah! you'll be more tired of me afore you've done," answered the man, with a sneer, and walked out of the room; leaving the Major to compose himself, as best he might, after the agitation of this extraordinary scene.

He sate and mused by his fire-side over the past events, and the confounded impudence and ingratitude of ser-

vants; and thought how he should get a new man: how devilish unpleasant it was for a man of his age, and with his habits, to part with a fellow to whom he had been accustomed: how Morgan had a receipt for boot-varnish, which was incomparably better and more comfortable to the feet than any he had ever tried: how very well he made mutton-broth, and tended him when he was unwell. "Gad, it's a hard thing to lose a fellow of that sort: but he must go," thought the Major. "He has grown rich, and impudent since he has grown rich. He was horribly tipsy and abusive to-night. We must part, and I must go out of the lodgings. Dammy, I like the lodgings; I'm used to 'em. It's very unpleasant, at my time of life, to change my quarters." And so on, mused the old gentleman. The shower-bath had done him good: the testiness was gone: the loss of the umbrella, the smell of paint at the Club, were forgotten under the superior excitement. "Confound the insolent villain!" thought the old gentleman. "He understood my wants to a nicety; he was the best servant in England." He thought about his servant as a man thinks of a horse that has carried him long and well, and that has come down with him, and is safe no longer. How the deuce to replace him? Where can he get such another animal?

In these melancholy cogitations the Major, who had donned his own dressing gown and replaced his head of hair (a little grey had been introduced into the *coiffure* of late by Mr. Truefitt, which had given the Major's head the most artless and respectable appearance); in these cogitations, we say, the Major, who had taken off his wig and put on his night-handkerchief, sate absorbed by the fire-side, when a feeble knock came at his door,

which was presently opened by the landlady of the lodgings.

"God bless my soul, Mrs. Brixham!" cried out the Major, startled that a lady should behold him in the

simple appareil of his night-toilette. "It—it's very late, Mrs. Brixham."

"I wish I might speak to you, sir," said the landlady, very piteously.

"About Morgan, I suppose? He has cooled himself at the pump. Can't take him back, Mrs. Brixham. Impossible. I'd determined to part with him before, when I heard of his dealings in the discount business—I sup-

pose you've heard of them, Mrs. Brixham? My servant's a capitalist, begad."

"Oh, sir," said Mrs. Brixham, "I know it to my cost. I borrowed from him a little money five years ago; and though I have paid him many times over, I am entirely in his power. I am ruined by him, sir. Everything I had is his. He's a dreadful man."

"Eh, Mrs. Brixham? *tant pis*—dev'lish sorry for you, and that I must quit your house after lodging here so long: there's no help for it. I must go."

"He says we must all go, sir," sobbed out the luckless widow. "He came down stairs from you just now—he had been drinking, and it always makes him very wicked—and he said that you had insulted him, sir, and treated him like a dog, and spoken to him unkindly; and he swore he would be revenged, and—and I owe him a hundred and twenty pounds, sir—and he has a bill of sale of all my furniture—and says he will turn me out of my house, and send my poor George to prison. He has been the ruin of my family, that man."

"Dev'lish sorry, Mrs. Brixham; pray take a chair. What can I do?"

"Could you not intercede with him for us? George will give half his allowance: my daughter can send something. If you will but stay on, sir, and pay a quarter's rent in advance—"

"My good madam, I would as soon give you a quarter in advance as not, if I were going to stay in the lodgings. But I can't; and I can't afford to fling away twenty pounds, my good madam. I'm a poor half-pay officer, and want every shilling I have, begad. As far as a few pounds goes—say five pounds—I don't say—and shall be most happy, and that sort of thing: and I'll

give it to you in the morning with pleasure: but—but it's getting late, and I have made a railroad journey."

"God's will be done, sir," said the poor woman, drying her tears. "I must bear my fate."

"And a dev'lish hard one it is, and most sincerely I pity you, Mrs. Brixham. I—I'll say ten pounds, if you will permit me. Good-night."

"Mr. Morgan, sir, when he came down stairs, and when—when I besought him to have pity on me, and told him he had been the ruin of my family, said something which I did not well understand—that he would ruin every family in the house—that he knew something would bring you down too—and that you should pay him for your—your insolence to him. I—I must own to you, that I went down on my knees to him, sir; and he said, with a dreadful oath against you, that he would have you on your knees."

"Me?—by Gad, that is too pleasant! Where is the confounded fellow?"

"He went away, sir. He said he should see you in the morning. Oh, pray try and pacify him, and save me and my poor boy." And the widow went away with this prayer, to pass her night as she might, and look for the dreadful morrow.

The last words about himself excited Major Pendennis so much, that his compassion for Mrs. Brixham's misfortunes was quite forgotten in the consideration of his own case.

"Me on my knees?" thought he, as he got into bed: "confound his impudence. Who ever saw me on my knees? What the devil does the fellow know? Gad, I've not had an affair these twenty years. I defy him." And the old campaigner turned round and slept pretty sound,

being rather excited and amused by the events of the day—the last day in Bury Street, he was determined it should be. " For it's impossible to stay on with a valet over me and a bankrupt landlady. What good can I do this poor devil of a woman? I'll give her twenty pound—there's Warrington's twenty pound, which he has just paid—but what's the use? She'll want more, and more, and more, and that cormorant Morgan will swallow all. No, dammy, I can't afford to know poor people; and to-morrow I'll say good-by—to Mrs. Brixham and Mr. Morgan."

CHAPTER LXVIII

IN WHICH THE MAJOR NEITHER YIELDS HIS MONEY NOR HIS LIFE

EARLY next morning Pendennis's shutters were opened by Morgan, who appeared as usual, with a face perfectly grave and respectful, bearing with him the old gentleman's clothes, cans of water, and elaborate toilette requisites.

"It's you, is it?" said the old fellow from his bed. "I shan't take you back again, you understand."

"I 'ave not the least wish to be took back agin, Major Pendennis," Mr. Morgan said, with grave dignity, "nor to serve you nor hany man. But as I wish you to be comf'table as long as you stay in my house, I came up to do what's ne'ssary." And once more, and for the last time, Mr. James Morgan laid out the silver dressing-case, and strapped the shining razor.

These offices concluded, he addressed himself to the Major with an indescribable solemnity, and said: "Thinkin' that you would most likely be in want of a

respectable pusson, until you suited yourself, I spoke to a young man last night, who is 'ere."

"Indeed," said the warrior in the tent-bed.

"He 'ave lived in the fust fam'lies, and I can wouch for his respectability."

"You are monstrous polite," grinned the old Major. And the truth is, that after the occurrences of the previous evening, Morgan had gone out to his own Club at the "Wheel of Fortune," and there finding Frosch, a courier and valet just returned from a foreign tour with young Lord Cubley, and for the present disposable, had represented to Mr. Frosch, that he, Morgan, had had "a devil of a blow hup with his own Gov'nor, and was goin' to retire from the business haltogether, and that if Frosch wanted a tempo'ry job, he might prob'bly have it by applying in Bury Street."

"You are very polite," said the Major, "and your recommendation, I am sure, will have every weight."

Morgan blushed; he felt his master was "a-chaffin' of him." "The man have awaited on you before, sir," he said with great dignity. "Lord De la Pole, sir, gave him to his nephew young Lord Cubley, and he have been with him on his foring tour, and not wishing to go to Fitzurse Castle, which Frosch's chest is delicate, and he cannot bear the cold in Scotland, he is free to serve you or not, as you choose."

"I repeat, sir, that you are exceedingly polite," said the Major. "Come in, Frosch—you will do very well—Mr. Morgan, will you have the great kindness to—"

"I shall show him what is ne'ssary, sir, and what is custom'ry for you to wish to 'ave done. Will you please to take breakfast 'ere or at the Club, Major Pendennis?"

"With your kind permission, I will breakfast here, and afterwards we will make our little arrangements."

"If you please, sir."

"Will you now oblige me by leaving the room?"

Morgan withdrew; the excessive politeness of his ex-employer made him almost as angry as the Major's bitterest words. And whilst the old gentleman is making his mysterious toilet, we will also modestly retire.

After breakfast, Major Pendennis and his new aide-de-camp occupied themselves in preparing for their departure. The establishment of the old bachelor was not very complicated. He encumbered himself with no useless wardrobe. A Bible (his mother's), a road-book, Pen's novel (calf elegant), and the Duke of Wellington's Despatches, with a few prints, maps, and portraits of that illustrious general, and of various sovereigns and consorts of this country, and of the General under whom Major Pendennis had served in India, formed his literary and artistical collection: he was always ready to march at a few hours' notice, and the cases in which he had brought his property into his lodgings some fifteen years before, were still in the lofts amply sufficient to receive all his goods. These, the young woman who did the work of the house, and who was known by the name of Betty to her mistress, and of Slavey to Mr. Morgan, brought down from their resting-place, and obediently dusted and cleaned under the eyes of the terrible Morgan. His demeanour was guarded and solemn; he had spoken no word as yet to Mrs. Brixham respecting his threats of the past night, but he looked as if he would execute them, and the poor widow tremblingly awaited her fate.

Old Pendennis, armed with his cane, superintended

the package of his goods and chattels, under the hands of Mr. Frosch, and the Slavey burned such of his papers as he did not care to keep: flung open doors and closets until they were all empty; and now all boxes and chests were closed, except his desk, which was ready to receive the final accounts of Mr. Morgan.

That individual now made his appearance, and brought his books. "As I wish to speak to you in privick, per'aps you will 'ave the kindness to request Frosch to step down stairs," he said, on entering.

"Bring a couple of cabs, Frosch, if you please—and wait down stairs until I ring for you," said the Major. Morgan saw Frosch down stairs, watched him go along the street upon his errand, and produced his books and accounts, which were simple and very easily settled.

"And now, sir," said he, having pocketed the cheque which his ex-employer gave him, and signed his name to his book with a flourish, "and now that accounts is closed between us, sir," he said, "I porpose to speak to you as one man to another" (Morgan liked the sound of his own voice; and, as an individual, indulged in public speaking whenever he could get an opportunity, at the Club, or the housekeeper's room), "and I must tell you, that I'm in *possussion of certing infamation.*"

"And may I inquire of what nature, pray?" asked the Major.

"It's valuable information, Major Pendennis, as you know very well. I know of a marriage as is no marriage —of a honourable Baronet as is no more married than I am; and which his wife is married to somebody else, as you know too, sir."

Pendennis at once understood all. "Ha! this accounts for your behaviour. You have been listening at

the door, sir, I suppose," said the Major, looking very haughty; "I forgot to look at the keyhole when I went to that public-house, or I might have suspected what sort of a person was behind it."

"I may have my schemes as you may have yours, I suppose," answered Morgan. "I may get my information, and I may act on that information, and I may find that information valuble as anybody else may. A poor servant may have a bit of luck as well as a gentleman, mayn't he? Don't you be putting on your 'aughty looks, sir, and comin' the aristocrat over me. That's all gammon with me. I'm an Englishman, I am, and as good as you."

"To what the devil does this tend, sir? and how does the secret which you have surprised concern me, I should like to know?" asked Major Pendennis, with great majesty.

"How does it concern me, indeed? how grand we are! How does it concern my nephew, I wonder? How does it concern my nephew's seat in Parlyment: and to subornation of bigamy? How does it concern that? What, are you to be the only man to have a secret, and to trade on it? Why shouldn't I go halves, Major Pendennis? I've found it out too. Look here! I ain't goin' to be unreasonable with you. Make it worth my while, and I'll keep the thing close. Let Mr. Arthur take his seat, and his rich wife, if you like; I don't want to marry her. But I will have my share, as sure as my name's James Morgan. And if I don't—"

"And if you don't, sir—what?" Pendennis asked.

"If I don't, I split, and tell all. I smash Clavering, and have him and his wife up for bigamy—so help me, I will. I smash young Hopeful's marriage, and I show

up you and him as makin' use of this secret, in order to squeeze a seat in Parlyment out of Sir Francis, and a fortune out of his wife."

"Mr. Pendennis knows no more of this business than the babe unborn, sir," cried the Major, aghast. "No more than Lady Clavering, than Miss Amory does."

"Tell that to the marines, Major," replied the valet; "that cock won't fight with me."

"Do you doubt my word, you villain?"

"No bad language. I don't care one twopence'a'p'ny whether your word's true or not. I tell you, I intend this to be a nice little annuity to me, Major: for I have every one of you; and I ain't such a fool as to let you go. I should say that you might make it five hundred a year to me among you, easy. Pay me down the first quarter now, and I'm as mum as a mouse. Just give me a note for one twenty-five. There's your cheque-book on your desk."

"And there's this too, you villain," cried the old gentleman. In the desk to which the valet pointed was a little double-barrelled pistol, which had belonged to Pendennis's old patron, the Indian commander-in-chief, and which had accompanied him in many a campaign. "One more word, you scoundrel, and I'll shoot you, like a mad dog. Stop—by Jove, I'll do it now. You'll assault me, will you? You'll strike at an old man, will you, you lying coward? Kneel down and say your prayers, sir, for by the Lord you shall die."

The Major's face glared with rage at his adversary, who looked terrified before him for a moment, and at the next, with a shriek of "Murder!" sprang towards the open window, under which a policeman happened to

be on his beat. "Murder! Police!" bellowed Mr. Morgan.

To his surprise, Major Pendennis wheeled away the table and walked to the other window, which was also open. He beckoned the policeman. "Come up here, policeman," he said, and then went and placed himself against the door.

"You miserable sneak," he said to Morgan; "the pistol hasn't been loaded these fifteen years, as you would have known very well, if you had not been such a coward. That policeman is coming, and I will have him up, and have your trunks searched; I have reason to believe that you are a thief, sir. I know you are. I'll swear to the things."

"You gave 'em to me—you gave 'em to me!" cried Morgan.

The Major laughed. "We'll see," he said; and the guilty valet remembered some fine lawn-fronted shirts—a certain gold-headed cane—an opera-glass, which he had forgotten to bring down, and of which he had assumed the use along with certain articles of his master's clothes, which the old dandy neither wore nor asked for.

Policeman X entered; followed by the scared Mrs. Brixham and her maid-of-all-work, who had been at the door and found some difficulty in closing it against the street amateurs, who wished to see the row. The Major began instantly to speak.

"I have had occasion to discharge this drunken scoundrel," he said. "Both last night and this morning he insulted and assaulted me. I am an old man and took up a pistol. You see it is not loaded, and this coward cried out before he was hurt. I am glad you are come. I

A Good Shot

was charging him with taking my property, and desired to examine his trunks and his room."

"The velvet cloak you ain't worn these three years, nor the weskits, and I thought I might take the shirts, and I—I take my hoath I intended to put back the hopera-glass," roared Morgan, writhing with rage and terror.

"The man acknowledges that he is a thief," the Major said, calmly. "He has been in my service for years, and I have treated him with every kindness and confidence. We will go up stairs and examine his trunks."

In those trunks Mr. Morgan had things which he would fain keep from public eyes. Mr. Morgan, the bill-discounter, gave goods as well as money to his customers. He provided young spendthrifts with snuff-boxes and pins and jewels and pictures and cigars, and of a very doubtful quality those cigars and jewels and pictures were. Their display at a police-office, the discovery of his occult profession, and the exposure of the Major's property, which he had appropriated, indeed, rather than stolen,—would not have added to the reputation of Mr. Morgan. He looked a piteous image of terror and discomfiture.

"He'll smash me, will he?" thought the Major. "I'll crush him now, and finish with him."

But he paused. He looked at poor Mrs. Brixham's scared face; and he thought for a moment to himself that the man brought to bay and in prison might make disclosures which had best be kept secret, and that it was best not to deal too fiercely with a desperate man.

"Stop," he said, "policeman. I'll speak with this man by himself."

"Do you give Mr. Morgan in charge?" said the policeman.

"I have brought no charge as yet," the Major said, with a significant look at his man.

"Thank you, sir," whispered Morgan, very low.

"Go outside the door, and wait there, policeman, if you please.—Now, Morgan, you have played one game with me, and you have not had the best of it, my good man. No, begad, you've not had the best of it, though you had the best hand; and you've got to pay, too, now, you scoundrel."

"Yes, sir," said the man.

"I've only found out, within the last week, the game which you have been driving, you villain. Young De Boots, of the Blues, recognised you as the man who came to barracks, and did business one-third in money, one-third in eau-de-Cologne, and one-third in French prints, you confounded demure old sinner! I didn't miss anything, or care a straw what you'd taken, you booby; but I took the shot, and it hit—hit the bull's-eye, begad. Dammy, sir, I'm an old campaigner."

"What do you want with me, sir?"

"I'll tell you. Your bills, I suppose, you keep about you in that dem'd great leather pocket-book, don't you? You'll burn Mrs. Brixham's bill?"

"Sir, I ain't a-goin' to part with my property," growled the man.

"You lent her sixty pounds five years ago. She and that poor devil of an insurance clerk, her son, have paid you fifty pounds a year ever since; and you have got a bill of sale of her furniture, and her note of hand for a hundred and fifty pounds. She told me so last night. By Jove, sir, you've bled that poor woman enough."

"I won't give it up," said Morgan. "If I do I'm—"

"Policeman!" cried the Major.

"You shall have the bill," said Morgan. "You're not going to take money of me, and you a gentleman?"

"I shall want you directly," said the Major to X, who here entered, and who again withdrew.

"No, my good sir," the old gentleman continued; "I have not any desire to have farther pecuniary transactions with you; but we will draw out a little paper, which you will have the kindness to sign. No, stop!—you shall write it: you have improved immensely in writing of late, and have now a very good hand. You shall sit down and write, if you please—there, at that table—so—let me see—we may as well have the date. Write 'Bury Street, St. James's, October 21, 18—.'"

And Morgan wrote as he was instructed, and as the pitiless old Major continued:—

"I, James Morgan, having come in extreme poverty into the service of Arthur Pendennis, Esquire, of Bury Street, St. James's, a Major in her Majesty's service, acknowledge that I received liberal wages and board wages from my employer, during fifteen years.—You can't object to that, I am sure," said the Major.

"During fifteen years," wrote Morgan.

"In which time, by my own care and prudence," the dictator resumed, "I have managed to amass sufficient money to purchase the house in which my master resides, and besides to effect other savings. Amongst other persons from whom I have had money, I may mention my present tenant, Mrs. Brixham, who in consideration of sixty pounds advanced by me five years since, has paid back to me the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, besides giving me a note of hand

for one hundred and twenty pounds, which I restore to her at the desire of my late master, Major Arthur Pendennis, and therewith free her furniture, of which I had a bill of sale.—Have you written?"

"I think if this pistol was loaded, I'd blow your brains out," said Morgan.

"No, you wouldn't. You have too great a respect for your valuable life, my good man," the Major answered. "Let us go on and begin a new sentence."

"And having, in return for my master's kindness, stolen his property from him, which I acknowledge to be now up stairs in my trunks: and having uttered falsehoods regarding his and other honourable families, I do hereby, in consideration of his clemency to me, express my regret for uttering these falsehoods, and for stealing his property; and declare that I am not worthy of belief, and that I hope—yes, begad—that I hope to amend for the future. Signed, James Morgan."

"I'm d——d if I sign it," said Morgan.

"My good man, it will happen to you, whether you sign or no, begad," said the old fellow, chuckling at his own wit. "There, I shall not use this, you understand, unless—unless I am compelled to do so. Mrs. Brixham, and our friend the policeman, will witness it, I dare say, without reading it: and I will give the old lady back her note of hand, and say, which you will confirm, that she and you are quits. I see there is Frosch come back with the cab for my trunks; I shall go to an hotel.—You may come in now, policeman; Mr. Morgan and I have arranged our little dispute. If Mrs. Brixham will sign this paper, and you, policeman, will do so, I shall be very much obliged to you both. Mrs. Brixham, you and your worthy landlord, Mr. Morgan, are

quits. I wish you joy of him. Let Frosch come and pack the rest of the things."

Frosch, aided by the Slavey, under the calm superintendence of Mr. Morgan, carried Major Pendennis's boxes to the cab in waiting; and Mrs. Brixham, when her persecutor was not by, came and asked a Heaven's blessing upon the Major, her preserver, and the best and quietest and kindest of lodgers. And having given her a finger to shake, which the humble lady received with a curtsey, and over which she was ready to make a speech full of tears, the Major cut short that valedictory oration, and walked out of the house to the hotel in Jermyn Street, which was not many steps from Morgan's door.

That individual, looking forth from the parlour-window, discharged anything but blessings at his parting guest; but the stout old boy could afford not to be frightened at Mr. Morgan, and flung him a look of great contempt and humour as he strutted away with his cane.

Major Pendennis had not quitted his house of Bury Street many hours, and Mr. Morgan was enjoying his *otium* in a dignified manner, surveying the evening fog, and smoking a cigar, on the door-steps, when Arthur Pendennis, Esq., the hero of this history, made his appearance at the well-known door.

"My uncle out, I suppose, Morgan?" he said to the functionary; knowing full well that to smoke was treason, in the presence of the Major.

"Major Pendennis *is* hout, sir," said Morgan, with gravity, bowing, but not touching the elegant cap which he wore. "Major Pendennis have left this 'ouse to-day,

sir, and I have no longer the honour of being in his service, sir."

"Indeed, and where is he?"

"I believe he 'ave taken tempor'y lodgings at Cox's 'otel, in Jummin Street," said Mr. Morgan; and added, after a pause, "Are you in town for some time, pray, sir? Are you in chambers? I should like to have the honour of waiting on you there: and would be thankful if you would favour me with a quarter of an hour."

"Do you want my uncle to take you back?" asked Arthur, insolent and good-natured.

"I want no such thing; I'd see him—" the man glared at him for a minute, but he stopped. "No, sir, thank you," he said in a softer voice; "it's only with you that I wish to speak, on some business which concerns you; and perhaps you would favour me by walking into my house."

"If it is but for a minute or two, I will listen to you, Morgan," said Arthur; and thought to himself, "I suppose the fellow wants me to patronise him;" and he entered the house. A card was already in the front windows, proclaiming that apartments were to be let, and having introduced Mr. Pendennis into the dining-room, and offered him a chair, Mr. Morgan took one himself, and proceeded to convey some information to him, of which the reader has already had cognisance.

CHAPTER LXIX

IN WHICH PENDENNIS COUNTS HIS EGGS

OUR friend had arrived in London on that day only, though but for a brief visit, and having left some fellow travellers at an hotel to which he had convoyed them from the West, he hastened to the chambers in Lamb Court, which were basking in as much sun as chose to visit that dreary but not altogether comfortless building. Freedom stands in lieu of sunshine in chambers; and Templars grumble, but take their ease in their Inn. Pen's domestic announced to him that Warrington was in chambers too, and, of course, Arthur ran up to his friend's room straightway, and found it, as of old, perfumed with the pipe, and George once more at work at his newspapers and reviews. The pair greeted each other with the rough cordiality which young Englishmen use one to another: and which carries a great deal of warmth and kindness under its rude exterior. Warrington smiled and took his pipe out of his mouth, and said, "Well, young one!" Pen advanced and held out his

hand, and said, "How are you, old boy?" And so this greeting passed between two friends who had not seen each other for months. Alphonse and Frédéric would have rushed into each other's arms and shrieked *Ce bon cœur! ce cher Alphonse!* over each other's shoulders. Max and Wilhelm would have bestowed half a dozen kisses, scented with Havannah, upon each other's moustachios. "Well, young one!" "How are you, old boy?" is what two Britons say: after saving each other's lives, possibly, the day before. To-morrow they will leave off shaking hands, and only wag their heads at one another as they come to breakfast. Each has for the other the very warmest confidence and regard; each would share his purse with the other: and hearing him attacked, would break out in the loudest and most enthusiastic praise of his friend; but they part with a mere Good-by, they meet with a mere How-d'you-do? and they don't write to each other in the interval. Curious modesty, strange stoical decorum of English friendship! "Yes, we are not demonstrative like those confounded foreigners," says Hardman; who not only shows no friendship, but never felt any all his life long.

"Been in Switzerland?" says Pen. "Yes," says Warrington. "Couldn't find a bit of tobacco fit to smoke till we came to Strasburg, where I got some caporal." The man's mind is full, very likely, of the great sights which he has seen, of the great emotions with which the vast works of nature have inspired it. But his enthusiasm is too coy to show itself, even to his closest friend, and he veils it with a cloud of tobacco. He will speak more fully of confidential evenings, however, and write ardently and frankly about that which he is shy of saying. The thoughts and experience of his travel

will come forth in his writings; as the learning, which he never displays in talk, enriches his style with pregnant allusion and brilliant illustration, colours his generous eloquence, and points his wit.

The elder gives a rapid account of the places which he has visited in his tour. He has seen Switzerland, North Italy, and the Tyrol—he has come home by Vienna, and Dresden, and the Rhine. He speaks about these places in a shy sulky voice, as if he had rather not mention them at all, and as if the sight of them had rendered him very unhappy. The outline of the elder man's tour thus gloomily sketched out, the young one begins to speak. He has been in the country—very much bored—canvassing—uncommonly slow—he is here for a day or two, and going on to—to the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, to some friends—that will be uncommonly slow, too. How hard it is to make an Englishman acknowledge that he is happy!

"And the seat in Parliament, Pen? Have you made it all right?" asks Warrington.

"All right,—as soon as Parliament meets and a new writ can be issued, Clavering retires, and I step into his shoes," says Pen.

"And under which king does Bezonian speak or die?" asked Warrington. "Do we come out as Liberal Conservative, or as Government man, or on our own hook?"

"Hem! There are no politics now; every man's politics, at least, are pretty much the same. I have not got acres enough to make me a Protectionist; nor could I be one, I think, if I had all the land in the county. I shall go pretty much with Government, and in advance of them upon some social questions which I have been getting up during the vacation;—don't grin, you old

Cynic, I *have* been getting up the Blue Books, and intend to come out rather strong on the Sanitary and Colonisation questions."

"We reserve to ourselves the liberty of voting against Government, though we are generally friendly. We are, however, friends of the people *avant tout.* We give lectures at the Clavering Institute, and shake hands with the intelligent mechanics. We think the franchise ought to be very considerably enlarged; at the same time we are free to accept office some day, when the House has listened to a few crack speeches from us, and the Administration perceives our merit."

"I am not Moses," said Pen, with, as usual, somewhat of melancholy in his voice. "I have no laws from Heaven to bring down to the people from the mountain. I don't belong to the mountain at all, or set up to be a leader and reformer of mankind. My faith is not strong enough for that; nor my vanity, nor my hypocrisy, great enough. I will tell no lies, George, that I promise you; and do no more than coincide in those which are necessary and pass current, and can't be got in without recalling the whole circulation. Give a man at least the advantage of his sceptical turn. If I find a good thing to say in the House, I will say it; a good measure, I will support it; a fair place, I will take it, and be glad of my luck. But I would no more flatter a great man than a mob; and now you know as much about my politics as I do. What call have I to be a Whig? Whiggism is not a divine institution. Why not vote with the Liberal Conservatives? They have done for the nation what the Whigs would never have done without them. Who converted both?—the Radicals and the country outside. I think the *Morning Post* is often

right, and *Punch* is often wrong. I don't profess a call, but take advantage of a chance. *Parlons d'autre chose.*"

"The next thing at your heart, after ambition, is love, I suppose?" Warrington said. "How have our young loves prospered? Are we going to change our condition, and give up our chambers? Are you going to divorce me, Arthur, and take unto yourself a wife?"

"I suppose so. She is very good-natured and lively. She sings, and she don't mind smoking. She'll have a fair fortune—I don't know how much—but my uncle augurs everything from the Begum's generosity, and says that she will come down very handsomely. And I think Blanche is dev'lish fond of me," said Arthur, with a sigh.

"That means that we accept her caresses and her money."

"Haven't we said before, that life was a transaction?" Pendennis said. "I don't pretend to break my heart about her. I have told her pretty fairly what my feelings are—and—and have engaged myself to her. And since I saw her last, and for the last two months especially, whilst I have been in the country, I think she has been growing fonder and fonder of me; and her letters to me, and especially to Laura, seem to show it. Mine have been simple enough—no raptures nor vows, you understand—but looking upon the thing as an *affaire faite;* and not desirous to hasten or defer the completion."

"And Laura? how is she?" Warrington asked frankly.

"Laura, George," said Pen, looking his friend hard in the face—"by Heaven, Laura is the best, and noblest, and dearest girl the sun ever shone upon." His own

voice fell as he spoke: it seemed as if he could hardly utter the words: he stretched out his hand to his comrade, who took it and nodded his head.

"Have you only found out that now, young un?" Warrington said after a pause.

"Who has not learned things too late, George?" cried Arthur, in his impetuous way, gathering words and emotion as he went on. "Whose life is not a disappointment? Who carries his heart entire to the grave without a mutilation? I never knew anybody who was happy quite: or who has not had to ransom himself out of the hands of Fate with the payment of some dearest treasure or other. Lucky if we are left alone afterwards, when we have paid our fine, and if the tyrant visits us no more. Suppose I have found out that I have lost the greatest prize in the world, now that it can't be mine—that for years I had an angel under my tent, and let her go?—am I the only one—ah, dear old boy, am I the only one? And do you think my lot is easier to bear because I own that I deserve it? She's gone from us. God's blessing be with her! She might have stayed, and I lost her; it's like Undine: isn't it, George?"

"She was in this room once," said George.

He saw her there—he heard the sweet low voice—he saw the sweet smile and eyes shining so kindly—the face remembered so fondly—thought of in what night-watches—blest and loved always—gone now! A glass that had held a nosegay—a Bible with Helen's handwriting—were all that were left him of that brief flower of his life. Say it is a dream: say it passes: better the recollection of a dream than an aimless waking from a blank stupor.

The two friends sate in silence awhile, each occupied

with his own thoughts and aware of the other's. Pen broke it presently, by saying that he must go and seek for his uncle, and report progress to the old gentleman. The Major had written in a very bad humour; the Major was getting old. "I should like to see you in Parliament, and snugly settled with a comfortable house and an heir to the name before I make my bow. Show me these," the Major wrote, "and then, let old Arthur Pendennis make room for the younger fellows; he has walked the Pall Mall *pavé* long enough."

"There is a kindness about the old heathen," said Warrington. "He cares for somebody besides himself, at least for some other part of himself besides that which is buttoned into his own coat;—for you and your race. He would like to see the progeny of the Pendennises multiplying and increasing, and hopes that they may inherit the land. The old patriarch blesses you from the Club window of Bays's, and is carried off and buried under the flags of St. James's Church, in sight of Piccadilly, and the cab-stand, and the carriages going to the levee. It is an edifying ending."

"The new blood I bring into the family," mused Pen, "is rather tainted. If I had chosen, I think my father-in-law Amory would not have been the progenitor I should have desired for my race; nor my grandfather-in-law Snell; nor our oriental ancestors. By the way, who was Amory? Amory was lieutenant of an Indiaman. Blanche wrote some verses about him,—about the storm, the mountain wave, the seaman's grave, the gallant father, and that sort of thing. Amory was drowned commanding a country ship between Calcutta and Sydney; Amory and the Begum weren't happy together. She has been unlucky in her selection of husbands, the

good old lady, for, between ourselves, a more despicable creature than Sir Francis Clavering, of Clavering Park, Baronet, never—" "Never legislated for his country," broke in Warrington; at which Pen blushed rather.

"By the way, at Baden," said Warrington, "I found our friend the Chevalier Strong in great state, and wearing his orders. He told me that he had quarrelled with Clavering, of whom he seemed to have almost as bad an opinion as you have, and in fact, I think, though I will not be certain, confided to me his opinion, that Clavering was an utter scoundrel. That fellow Bloundell, who taught you card-playing at Oxbridge, was with Strong; and time, I think, has brought out his valuable qualities, and rendered him a more accomplished rascal than he was during your undergraduateship. But the king of the place was the famous Colonel Altamont, who was carrying all before him, giving fêtes to the whole society, and breaking the bank, it was said."

"My uncle knows something about that fellow—Clavering knows something about him. There's something *louche* regarding him. But come! I must go to Bury Street, like a dutiful nephew." And, taking his hat, Pen prepared to go.

"I will walk, too," said Warrington. And they descended the stairs, stopping, however, at Pen's chambers, which, as the reader has been informed, were now on the lower story.

Here Pen began sprinkling himself with eau-de-Cologne, and carefully scenting his hair and whiskers with that odoriferous water.

"What is the matter? You've not been smoking. Is it my pipe that has poisoned you?" growled Warrington.

"I am going to call upon some women," said Pen. "I'm—I'm going to dine with 'em. They are passing through town, and are at an hotel in Jermyn Street."

Warrington looked with good-natured interest at the young fellow dandifying himself up to a pitch of completeness; and appearing at length in a gorgeous shirt-front and neck-cloth, fresh gloves, and glistening boots. George had a pair of thick high-lows, and his old shirt was torn about the breast, and ragged at the collar, where his blue beard had worn it.

"Well, young un," said he, simply, "I like you to be a buck, somehow. When I walk about with you, it is as if I had a rose in my button-hole. And you are still affable. I don't think there is any young fellow in the Temple turns out like you; and I don't believe you were ever ashamed of walking with me yet."

"Don't laugh at me, George," said Pen.

"I say, Pen," continued the other, sadly, "if you write—if you write to Laura, I wish you would say 'God bless her' from me."

Pen blushed; and then looked at Warrington; and then—and then burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughing.

"I'm going to dine with her," he said. "I brought her and Lady Rockminster up from the country to-day—made two days of it—slept last night at Bath—I say, George, come and dine, too. I may ask any one I please, and the old lady is constantly talking about you."

George refused. George had an article to write. George hesitated; and oh, strange to say! at last he agreed to go. It was agreed that they should go and call upon the ladies; and they marched away in high spirits to the hotel in Jermyn Street. Once more the

dear face shone upon him; once more the sweet voice spoke to him, and the tender hand pressed a welcome.

There still wanted half-an-hour to dinner. You will go and see your uncle now, Mr. Pendennis," old Lady Rockminster said. " You will not bring him to dinner—no—his old stories are intolerable; and I want to talk to Mr. Warrington; I dare say he will amuse us. I think we have heard all your stories. We have been together for two whole days, and I think we are getting tired of each other."

So, obeying her ladyship's orders, Arthur went down stairs and walked to his uncle's lodgings.

CHAPTER LXX

FIAT JUSTITIA

THE dinner was served when Arthur returned, and Lady Rockminster began to scold him for arriving late. But Laura, looking at her cousin, saw that his face was so pale and scared that she interrupted her imperious patroness; and asked, with tender alarm, what had happened? Was Arthur ill?

Arthur drank a large bumper of sherry. "I have heard the most extraordinary news; I will tell you afterwards," he said, looking at the servants. He was very nervous and agitated during the dinner. "Don't tramp and beat so with your feet under the table," Lady Rockminster said. "You have trodden on Fido and upset his saucer. You see Mr. Warrington keeps his boots quiet."

At the dessert—it seemed as if the unlucky dinner would never be over—Lady Rockminster said, "This dinner has been exceedingly stupid. I suppose something has happened, and that you want to speak to Laura. I will go and have my nap. I am not sure that I shall have any tea—no. Good-night, Mr. Warrington. You must come again, and when there is no business to talk about." And the old lady, tossing

up her head, walked away from the room with great dignity.

George and the others had risen with her, and Warrington was about to go away, and was saying "Goodnight" to Laura, who, of course, was looking much alarmed about her cousin, when Arthur said, "Pray, stay, George. You should hear my news too, and give me your counsel in this case. I hardly know how to act in it."

"It's something about Blanche, Arthur," said Laura, her heart beating, and her cheek blushing, as she thought it had never blushed in her life.

"Yes—and the most extraordinary story," said Pen. "When I left you to go to my uncle's lodgings, I found his servant, Morgan, who has been with him so long, at the door, and he said that he and his master had parted that morning; that my uncle had quitted the house, and had gone to an hotel—this hotel. I asked for him when I came in; but he was gone out to dinner. Morgan then said that he had something of a most important nature to communicate to me, and begged me to step into the house; his house it is now. It appears the scoundrel has saved a great deal of money whilst in my uncle's service, and is now a capitalist and a millionaire, for what I know. Well, I went into the house, and what do you think he told me? This must be a secret between us all—at least if we can keep it, now that it is in possession of that villain. Blanche's father is not dead. He has come to life again. The marriage between Clavering and the Begum is no marriage."

"And Blanche, I suppose, is her grandfather's heir?" said Warrington.

"Perhaps: but the child of what a father! Amory is

an escaped convict—Clavering knows it; my uncle knows it—and it was with this piece of information held over Clavering *in terrorem* that the wretched old man got him to give up his borough to me."

"Blanche doesn't know it," said Laura, "nor poor Lady Clavering?"

"No," said Pen; "Blanche does not even know the history of her father. She knew that he and her mother had separated, and had heard as a child, from Bonner, her nurse, that Mr. Amory was drowned in New South Wales. He was there as a convict, not as a ship's captain, as the poor girl thought. Lady Clavering has told me that they were not happy, and that her husband was a bad character. She would tell me all, she said, some day: and I remember her saying to me, with tears in her eyes, that it was hard for a woman to be forced to own that she was glad to hear her husband was dead: and that twice in her life she should have chosen so badly. What is to be done now? The man can't show and claim his wife: death is probably over him if he discovers himself: return to transportation certainly. But the rascal has held the threat of discovery over Clavering for some time past, and has extorted money from him time after time."

"It is our friend Colonel Altamont, of course," said Warrington: "I see all now."

"If the rascal comes back," continued Arthur, "Morgan, who knows his secret, will use it over him—and having it in his possession, proposes to extort money from us all. The d——d rascal supposed I was cognisant of it," said Pen, white with anger; "asked me if I would give him an annuity to keep it quiet; threatened me, *me*, as if I was trafficking with this wretched

old Begum's misfortune; and would extort a seat in Parliament out of that miserable Clavering. Good heavens! was my uncle mad, to tamper in such a conspiracy? Fancy our mother's son, Laura, trading on such a treason!"

"I can't fancy it, dear Arthur," said Laura; seizing Arthur's hand, and kissing it.

"No!" broke out Warrington's deep voice, with a tremor; he surveyed the two generous and loving young people with a pang of indescribable love and pain. "No. Our boy can't meddle with such a wretched intrigue as that. Arthur Pendennis can't marry a convict's daughter; and sit in Parliament as Member for the hulks. You must wash your hands of the whole affair, Pen. You must break off. You must give no explanations of why and wherefore, but state that family reasons render a match impossible. It is better that those poor women should fancy you false to your word than that they should know the truth. Besides, you can get from that dog Clavering—I can fetch that for you easily enough—an acknowledgment that the reasons which you have given to him as the head of the family are amply sufficient for breaking off the union. Don't you think with me, Laura?" He scarcely dared to look her in the face as he spoke. Any lingering hope that he might have—any feeble hold that he might feel upon the last spar of his wrecked fortune, he knew he was casting away; and he let the wave of his calamity close over him. Pen had started up whilst he was speaking, looking eagerly at him. He turned his head away. He saw Laura rise up also and go to Pen, and once more take his hand and kiss it. "She thinks so too—God bless her!" said George.

"Her father's shame is not Blanche's fault, dear Arthur, is it?" Laura said, very pale, and speaking very quickly. "Suppose you had been married, would you desert her because she had done no wrong? Are you not pledged to her? Would you leave her because she is in misfortune? And if she is unhappy, wouldn't you console her? Our mother would, had she been here." And, as she spoke, the kind girl folded her arms round him, and buried her face upon his heart.

"Our mother is an angel with God," Pen sobbed out. "And you are the dearest and best of women—the dearest, the dearest, and the best. Teach me my duty. Pray for me that I may do it—pure heart. God bless you—God bless you, my sister."

"Amen," groaned out Warrington, with his head in his hands. "She is right," he murmured to himself. "She can't do any wrong, I think—that girl." Indeed, she looked and smiled like an angel. Many a day after, he saw that smile—saw her radiant face as she looked up at Pen—saw her putting back her curls, blushing and smiling, and still looking fondly towards him.

She leaned for a moment her little fair hand on the table, playing on it. "And now, and now," she said, looking at the two gentlemen—

"And what now?" asked George.

"And now we will have some tea," said Miss Laura, with her smile.

But before this unromantic conclusion to a rather sentimental scene could be suffered to take place, a servant brought word that Major Pendennis had returned to the hotel, and was waiting to see his nephew. Upon this announcement, Laura, not without some alarm, and an

appealing look at Pen, which said, "Behave yourself well—hold to the right, and do your duty—be gentle, but firm with your uncle"—Laura, we say, with these warnings written in her face, took leave of the two gentlemen, and retreated to her dormitory. Warrington, who was not generally fond of tea, yet grudged that expected cup very much. Why could not old Pendennis have come in an hour later? Well, an hour sooner or later, what matter? The hour strikes at last. The inevitable moment comes to say Farewell. The hand is shaken, the door closed, and the friend gone; and, the brief joy over, you are alone. "In which of those many windows of the hotel does *her* light beam?" perhaps he asks himself as he passes down the street. He strides away to the smoking-room of a neighbouring Club, and there applies himself to his usual solace of a cigar. Men are brawling and talking loud about politics, opera-girls, horse-racing, the atrocious tyranny of the committee;—bearing this sacred secret about him, he enters into this brawl. Talk away, each louder than the other. Rattle and crack jokes. Laugh and tell your wild stories. It is strange to take one's place and part in the midst of the smoke and din, and think every man here has his secret *ego* most likely, which is sitting lonely and apart, away in the private chamber, from the loud game in which the rest of us are joining!

Arthur, as he traversed the passages of the hotel, felt his anger rousing up within him. He was indignant to think that yonder old gentleman whom he was about to meet, should have made him such a tool and puppet, and so compromised his honour and good name. The old fellow's hand was very cold and shaky when Arthur took it. He was coughing; he was grumbling over the

fire; Frosch could not bring his dressing-gown or arrange his papers as that d——d confounded impudent scoundrel of a Morgan. The old gentleman bemoaned himself, and cursed Morgan's ingratitude with peevish pathos.

"The confounded impudent scoundrel! He was drunk last night, and challenged me to fight him, Pen: and begad, at one time I was so excited that I thought I should have driven a knife into him; and the infernal rascal has made ten thousand pound, I believe—and deserves to be hanged, and will be; but, curse him! I wish he could have lasted out my time. He knew all my ways, and, dammy, when I rang the bell, the confounded thief brought the thing I wanted—not like that stupid German lout. And what sort of time have you had in the country? Been a good deal with Lady Rockminster? You can't do better. She is one of the old school—*vieille école, bonne école,* hey? Dammy, they don't make gentlemen and ladies now; and in fifty years you'll hardly know one man from another. But they'll last my time. I ain't long for this business: I am getting very old, Pen, my boy; and, gad, I was thinking to-day, as I was packing up my little library, there's a Bible amongst the books that belonged to my poor mother; I would like you to keep that, Pen. I was thinking, sir, that you would most likely open the box when it was your property, and the old fellow was laid under the sod, sir." And the Major coughed and wagged his old head over the fire.

His age—his kindness, disarmed Pen's anger somewhat, and made Arthur feel no little compunction for the deed which he was about to do. He knew that the announcement which he was about to make would de-

stroy the darling hope of the old gentleman's life, and create in his breast a woeful anger and commotion.

"Hey—hey—I'm off, sir," nodded the Elder; "but I'd like to read a speech of yours in the *Times* before I go—'Mr. Pendennis said: Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking'—hey, sir? hey, Arthur? Begad, you look dev'lish well and healthy, sir. I always said my brother Jack would bring the family right. You must go down into the West, and buy the old estate, sir. *Nec tenui pennâ,* hey? We'll rise again, sir—rise again on the wing—and, begad, I shouldn't be surprised that you will be a Baronet before you die."

His words smote Pen. "And it is I," he thought, "that am going to fling down the poor old fellow's air-castle. Well, it must be. Here goes.—I—I went into your lodgings at Bury Street, though I did not find you," Pen slowly began—"and I talked with Morgan, uncle."

"Indeed!" The old gentleman's cheek began to flush involuntarily, and he muttered, "The cat's out of the bag now, begad!"

"He told me a story, sir, which gave me the deepest surprise and pain," said Pen.

The Major tried to look unconcerned. "What—that story about—about Whatdoyoucall'em, hey?"

"About Miss Amory's father—about Lady Clavering's first husband, and who he is, and what."

"Hem—a devilish awkward affair!" said the old man, rubbing his nose. "I—I've been aware of that—eh—confounded circumstance for some time."

"I wish I had known it sooner, or not at all," said Arthur, gloomily.

"He is all safe," thought the Senior, greatly relieved.

"Gad! I should have liked to keep it from you altogether—and from those two poor women, who are as innocent as unborn babes in the transaction."

"You are right. There is no reason why the two women should hear it; and I shall never tell them—though that villain, Morgan, perhaps may," Arthur said, gloomily. "He seems disposed to trade upon his secret, and has already proposed terms of ransom to me. I wish I had known of the matter earlier, sir. It is not a very pleasant thought to me that I am engaged to a convict's daughter."

"The very reason why I kept it from you—my dear boy. But Miss Amory is not a convict's daughter, don't you see? Miss Amory is the daughter of Lady Clavering, with fifty or sixty thousand pounds for a fortune; and her father-in-law, a Baronet and country gentleman, of high reputation, approves of the match, and gives up his seat in Parliament to his son-in-law. What can be more simple?"

"Is it true, sir?"

"Begad, yes, it is true, of course it's true. Amory's dead. I tell you he *is* dead. The first sign of life he shows, he is dead. He can't appear. We have him at a dead-lock, like the fellow in the play—the Critic, hey? —devilish amusing play, that Critic. Monstrous witty man Sheridan; and so was his son. By Gad, sir, when I was at the Cape, I remember—"

The old gentleman's garrulity, and wish to conduct Arthur to the Cape, perhaps arose from a desire to avoid the subject which was nearest his nephew's heart; but Arthur broke out, interrupting him—"If you had told me this tale sooner, I believe you would have spared me and yourself a great deal of pain and disappoint-

ment; and I should not have found myself tied to an engagement from which I can't, in honour, recede."

"No, begad, we've fixed you—and a man who's fixed to a seat in Parliament, and a pretty girl, with a couple of thousand a year, is fixed to no bad thing, let me tell you," said the old man.

"Great Heaven, sir!" said Arthur; "are you blind? Can't you see?"

"See what, young gentleman?" asked the other.

"See, that rather than trade upon this secret of Amory's," Arthur cried out, "I would go and join my father-in-law at the hulks! See, that rather than take a seat in Parliament as a bribe from Clavering for silence, I would take the spoons off the table! See, that you have given me a felon's daughter for a wife; doomed me to poverty and shame; cursed my career when it might have been—when it might have been so different but for you! Don't you see that we have been playing a guilty game, and have been over-reached;—that in offering to marry this poor girl, for the sake of her money, and the advancement she would bring, I was degrading myself, and prostituting my honour?"

"What in Heaven's name do you mean, sir?" cried the old man.

"I mean to say that there is a measure of baseness which I can't pass," Arthur said. "I have no other words for it, and am sorry if they hurt you. I have felt, for months past, that my conduct in this affair has been wicked, sordid, and worldly. I am rightly punished by the event, and having sold myself for money and a seat in Parliament, by losing both."

"How do you mean that you lose either?" shrieked the old gentleman. "Who the devil's to take your for-

tune or your seat away from you? By G—, Clavering *shall* give 'em to you. You shall have every shilling of eighty thousand pounds."

"I'll keep my promise to Miss Amory, sir," said Arthur.

"And, begad, her parents shall keep theirs to you."

"Not so, please God," Arthur answered. "I have sinned, but, Heaven help me, I will sin no more. I will let Clavering off from that bargain which was made without my knowledge. I will take no money with Blanche but that which was originally settled upon her; and I will try to make her happy. You have done it. You have brought this on me, sir. But you knew no better: and I forgive—"

"Arthur—in God's name—in your father's, who, by Heavens, was the proudest man alive, and had the honour of the family always at heart—in mine—for the sake of a poor broken-down old fellow, who has always been dev'lish fond of you—don't fling this chance away—I pray you, I beg you, I implore you, my dear, dear boy, don't fling this chance away. It's the making of you. You're sure to get on. You'll be a Baronet; it's three thousand a year: dammy, on my knees, there, I beg of you, don't do this."

And the old man actually sank down on his knees, and seizing one of Arthur's hands, looked up piteously at him. It was cruel to remark the shaking hands, the wrinkled and quivering face, the old eyes weeping and winking, the broken voice. "Ah, sir," said Arthur, with a groan, "you have brought pain enough on me, spare me this. You have wished me to marry Blanche. I marry her. For God's sake, sir, rise! I can't bear it."

"You—you mean to say that you will take her as a

beggar, and be one yourself?" said the old gentleman, rising up and coughing violently.

"I look at her as a person to whom a great calamity has befallen, and to whom I am promised. She cannot help the misfortune; and as she had my word when she was prosperous, I shall not withdraw it now she is poor. I will not take Clavering's seat, unless afterwards it should be given of his free will. I will not have a shilling more than her original fortune."

"Have the kindness to ring the bell," said the old gentleman. "I have done my best, and said my say; and I'm a dev'lish old fellow. And—and—it don't matter. And—and Shakspeare was right—and Cardinal Wolsey—begad—'and had I but served my God as I've served you'—yes, on my knees, by Jove, to my own nephew—I mightn't have been—Good-night, sir, you needn't trouble yourself to call again."

Arthur took his hand, which the old man left to him; it was quite passive and clammy. He looked very much oldened; and it seemed as if the contest and defeat had quite broken him.

On the next day he kept his bed, and refused to see his nephew.

CHAPTER LXXI

IN WHICH THE DECKS BEGIN TO CLEAR

WHEN, arrayed in his dressing-gown, Pen walked up, according to custom, to Warrington's chambers next morning, to inform his friend of the issue of the last night's interview with his uncle, and to ask, as usual, for George's advice and opinion, Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, was the only person whom Arthur found in the dear old chambers. George had taken a carpet-bag, and was gone. His address was to his brother's house in Suffolk. Packages, addressed to the newspaper and review for which he wrote, lay on the table, awaiting delivery.

"I found him at the table, when I came, the dear gentleman!" Mrs. Flanagan said, "writing at his papers, and one of the candles was burned out; and hard as his bed is, he wasn't in it all night, sir."

Indeed, having sat at the Club until the brawl there became intolerable to him, George had walked home, and had passed the night finishing some work on which

he was employed, and to the completion of which he bent himself with all his might. The labour was done, and the night was worn away somehow, and the tardy November dawn came and looked in on the young man as he sate over his desk. In the next day's paper, or quarter's review, many of us very likely admired the work of his genius, the variety of his illustration, the fierce vigour of his satire, the depth of his reason. There was no hint in his writing of the other thoughts which occupied him, and always accompanied him in his work: a tone more melancholy than was customary, a satire more bitter and impatient than that which he afterwards showed, may have marked the writings of this period of his life to the very few persons who knew his style or his name. We have said before, could we know the man's feelings as well as the author's thoughts—how interesting most books would be!—more interesting than merry. I suppose harlequin's face behind his mask is always grave, if not melancholy—certainly each man who lives by the pen, and happens to read this, must remember, if he will, his own experiences, and recall many solemn hours of solitude and labour. What a constant care sate at the side of the desk and accompanied him! Fever or sickness were lying possibly in the next room: a sick child might be there, with a wife watching over it terrified and in prayer; or grief might be bearing him down, and the cruel mist before the eyes rendering the paper scarce visible as he wrote on it, and the inexorable necessity drove on the pen. What man among us has not had nights and hours like these? But to the manly heart—severe as these pangs are, they are endurable: long as the night seems, the dawn comes at last, and the wounds heal, and the fever abates, and rest

comes, and you can afford to look back on the past misery with feelings that are anything but bitter.

Two or three books for reference, fragments of torn up manuscript, drawers open, pens and inkstand, lines half visible on the blotting-paper, a bit of sealing-wax twisted and bitten and broken into sundry pieces—such relics as these were about the table, and Pen flung himself down in George's empty chair—noting things according to his wont, or in spite of himself. There was a gap in the book-case (next to the old College Plato, with the Boniface Arms), where Helen's Bible used to be. He has taken that with him, thought Pen. He knew why his friend was gone. Dear, dear old George!

Pen rubbed his hand over his eyes. Oh, how much wiser, how much better, how much nobler he is than I, he thought. Where was such a friend, or such a brave heart? Where shall I ever hear such a frank voice, and kind laughter? Where shall I ever see such a true gentleman? No wonder she loved him. God bless him! What was I compared to him? What could she do else but love him? To the end of our days we will be her brothers, as fate wills that we can be no more. We'll be her knights, and wait on her; and when we're old, we'll say how we loved her. Dear, dear old George!

When Pen descended to his own chambers, his eye fell on the letter-box of his outer door, which he had previously overlooked, and there was a little note to A. P., Esq., in George's well-known hand-writing, George had put into Pen's box probably as he was going away.

"Dr Pen,—I shall be half way home when you breakfast, and intend to stay over Christmas, in Suff^k^, or elsewhere.

"I have my own opinion of the issue of matters about which

we talked in J—— St. yesterday; and think my presence *de trop*. "Vale. G. W."

"Give my very best regards and adieux to your cousin."

And so George was gone, and Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, ruled over his empty chambers.

Pen of course had to go and see his uncle on the day after their colloquy; and not being admitted, he naturally went to Lady Rockminster's apartments, where the old lady instantly asked for Bluebeard, and insisted that he should come to dinner.

"Bluebeard is gone," Pen said, and he took out poor George's scrap of paper, and handed it to Laura, who looked at it—did not look at Pen in return, but passed the paper back to him, and walked away. Pen rushed

into an eloquent eulogium upon his dear old George to Lady Rockminster, who was astonished at his enthusiasm. She had never heard him so warm in praise of anybody; and told him, with her usual frankness, that she didn't think it had been in his nature to care so much about any other person.

As Mr. Pendennis was passing through Waterloo Place, in one of his many walks to the hotel where Laura lived, and whither duty to his uncle carried Arthur every day, he saw issuing from Messrs. Gimcrack's celebrated shop an old friend, who was followed to his brougham by an obsequious shopman bearing parcels. The gentleman was in the deepest mourning: the brougham, the driver, and the horse, were in mourning. Grief in easy circumstances, and supported by the comfortablest springs and cushions, was typified in the equipage and the little gentleman, its proprietor.

"What, Foker! Hail, Foker!" cried out Pen—the reader, no doubt, has likewise recognised Arthur's old schoolfellow—and he held out his hand to the heir of the late lamented John Henry Foker, Esq., the master of Logwood and other houses, the principal partner in the great brewery of Foker & Co.: the greater portion of Foker's Entire.

A little hand, covered with a glove of the deepest ebony, and set off by three inches of a snowy wristband, was put forth to meet Arthur's salutation. The other little hand held a little morocco case, containing, no doubt, something precious, of which Mr. Foker had just become proprietor in Messrs. Gimcrack's shop. Pen's keen eyes and satiric turn showed him at once upon what errand Mr. Foker had been employed; and he thought of the heir in Horace pouring forth the gathered wine of

his father's vats; and that human nature is pretty much the same in Regent Street as in the Via Sacra.

"Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!" said Arthur.

"Ah!" said the other. "Yes. Thank you—very much obliged. How do you do, Pen?—very busy—good-by!" and he jumped into the black brougham, and sate like a little black Care behind the black coachman. He had blushed on seeing Pen, and shown other signs of guilt and perturbation, which Pen attributed to the novelty of his situation; and on which he began to speculate in his usual sardonic manner.

"Yes: so wags the world," thought Pen. "The stone closes over Harry the Fourth, and Harry the Fifth reigns in his stead. The old ministers at the brewery come and kneel before him with their books; the draymen, his subjects, fling up their red caps, and shout for him. What a grave deference and sympathy the bankers and the lawyers show! There was too great a stake at issue between those two that they should ever love each other very cordially. As long as one man keeps another out of twenty thousand a year, the younger must be always hankering after the crown, and the wish must be the father to the thought of possession. Thank Heaven, there was no thought of money between me and our dear mother, Laura."

"There never could have been. You would have spurned it!" cried Laura. "Why make yourself more selfish than you are, Pen; and allow your mind to own, for an instant, that it would have entertained such—such dreadful meanness? You make me blush for you, Arthur: you make me—" her eyes finished this sentence, and she passed her handkerchief across them.

"There are some truths which women will never ac-

knowledge," Pen said, "and from which your modesty always turns away. I do not say that I never knew the feeling, only that I am glad I had not the temptation. Is there any harm in that confession of weakness?"

"We are all taught to ask to be delivered from evil, Arthur," said Laura, in a low voice. "I am glad if you were spared from that great crime; and only sorry to think that you could by any possibility have been led into it. But you never could; and you don't think you could. Your acts are generous and kind: you disdain mean actions. You take Blanche without money, and without a bribe. Yes, thanks be to Heaven, dear brother. You could not have sold yourself away; I knew you could not when it came to the day, and you did not. Praise be—be where praise is due. Why does this horrid scepticism pursue you, my Arthur? Why doubt and sneer at your own heart—at every one's? Oh, if you knew the pain you give me—how I lie awake and think of those hard sentences, dear brother, and wish them unspoken, unthought!"

"Do I cause you many thoughts and many tears, Laura?" asked Arthur. The fulness of innocent love beamed from her in reply. A smile heavenly pure, a glance of unutterable tenderness, sympathy, pity, shone in her face—all which indications of love and purity Arthur beheld and worshipped in her, as you would watch them in a child, as one fancies one might regard them in an angel.

"I—I don't know what I have done," he said, simply, "to have merited such regard from two such women. It is like undeserved praise, Laura—or too much good fortune, which frightens one—or a great post, when a man feels that he is not fit for it. Ah, sister, how weak

and wicked we are; how spotless, and full of love and truth, Heaven made you! I think for some of you there has been no fall," he said, looking at the charming girl with an almost paternal glance of admiration. "You can't help having sweet thoughts, and doing good actions. Dear creature! they are the flowers which you bear."

"And what else, sir?" asked Laura. "I see a sneer coming over your face. What is it? Why does it come, to drive all the good thoughts away?"

"A sneer, is there? I was thinking, my dear, that nature in making you so good and loving did very well: but—"

"But what? What is that wicked but? and why are you always calling it up?"

"But will come in spite of us. But is reflection. But is the sceptic's familiar, with whom he has made a compact; and if he forgets it, and indulges in happy day-dreams, or building of air-castles, or listens to sweet music let us say, or to the bells ringing to church, But taps at the door, and says, Master, I am here. You are my master; but I am yours. Go where you will, you can't travel without me. I will whisper to you when you are on your knees at church. I will be at your marriage pillow. I will sit down at your table with your children. I will be behind your death-bed curtain. That is what But is," Pen said.

"Pen, you frighten me," cried Laura.

"Do you know what But came and said to me just now, when I was looking at you? But said, If that girl had reason as well as love, she would love you no more. If she knew you as you are—the sullied, selfish being which *you* know—she must part from you, and could

give you no love and no sympathy. Didn't I say," he added, fondly, "that some of you seem exempt from the fall? Love you know; but the knowledge of evil is kept from you."

"What is this you young folks are talking about?" asked Lady Rockminster, who at this moment made her appearance in the room, having performed, in the mystic retirement of her own apartments, and under the hands of her attendant, those elaborate toilette-rites without which the worthy old lady never presented herself to public view. "Mr. Pendennis, you are always coming here."

"It is very pleasant to be here," Arthur said: "and we were talking, when you came in, about my friend Foker, whom I met just now; and who, as your ladyship knows, has succeeded to his father's kingdom."

"He has a very fine property, he has fifteen thousand a year. He is my cousin. He is a very worthy young man. He must come and see me," said Lady Rockminster, with a look at Laura.

"He has been engaged for many years past to his cousin, Lady—"

"Lady Ann is a foolish little chit," Lady Rockminster said, with much dignity: "and I have no patience with her. She has outraged every feeling of society. She has broken her father's heart, and thrown away fifteen thousand a year."

"Thrown away! What has happened?" asked Pen.

"It will be the talk of the town in a day or two; and there is no need why I should keep the secret any longer," said Lady Rockminster, who had written and received a dozen letters on the subject. "I had a letter yesterday from my daughter, who was staying at Drummington

until all the world was obliged to go away on account of the frightful catastrophe which happened there. When Mr. Foker came home from Nice, and after the funeral, Lady Ann went down on her knees to her father, said that she never could marry her cousin, that she had contracted another attachment, and that she must die rather than fulfil her contract. Poor Lord Rosherville, who is dreadfully embarrassed, showed his daughter what the state of his affairs was, and that it was necessary that the arrangements should take place; and, in fine, we all supposed that she had listened to reason, and intended to comply with the desires of her family. But what has happened?—last Thursday she went out after breakfast with her maid, and was married in the very church in Drummington Park to Mr. Hobson, her father's own chaplain and her brother's tutor; a red-haired widower with two children. Poor dear Rosherville is in a dreadful way: he wishes Henry Foker should marry Alice or Barbara; but Alice is marked with the small-pox, and Barbara is ten years older than he is. And, of course, now the young man is his own master, he will think of choosing for himself. The blow on Lady Agnes is very cruel. She is inconsolable. She has the house in Grosvenor Street for her life, and her settlement, which was very handsome. Have you not met her? Yes, she dined one day at Lady Clavering's —the first day I saw you, and a very disagreeable young man I thought you were. But I have formed you. We have formed him, haven't we, Laura? Where is Bluebeard? let him come. That horrid Grindley, the dentist, will keep me in town another week."

To the latter part of her ladyship's speech Arthur gave no ear. He was thinking for whom could Foker

be purchasing those trinkets which he was carrying away from the jeweller's? Why did Harry seem anxious to avoid him? Could he be still faithful to the attachment which had agitated him so much, and sent him abroad eighteen months back? Psha! The bracelets and presents were for some of Harry's old friends of the Opera or the French Theatre. Rumours from Naples and Paris, rumours such as are borne to Club smoking-rooms, had announced that the young man had found distractions; or, precluded from his virtuous attachment, the poor fellow had flung himself back upon his old companions and amusements—not the only man or woman whom society forces into evil, or debars from good: not the only victim of the world's selfish and wicked laws.

As a good thing when it is to be done cannot be done too quickly, Laura was anxious that Pen's marriage intentions should be put into execution as speedily as possible, and pressed on his arrangements with rather a feverish anxiety. Why could she not wait? Pen could afford to do so with perfect equanimity, but Laura would hear of no delay. She wrote to Pen: she implored Pen: she used every means to urge expedition. It seemed as if she could have no rest until Arthur's happiness was complete.

She offered herself to dearest Blanche to come and stay at Tunbridge with her, when Lady Rockminster should go on her intended visit to the reigning house of Rockminster; and although the old dowager scolded, and ordered, and commanded, Laura was deaf and disobedient; she must go to Tunbridge, she would go to Tunbridge; she who ordinarily had no will of her own,

and complied smilingly with anybody's whim and caprices, showed the most selfish and obstinate determination in this instance. The dowager lady must nurse herself in her rheumatism, she must read herself to sleep, if she would not hear her maid, whose voice croaked, and who made sad work of the sentimental passages in the novels—Laura must go, and be with her new sister. In another week, she proposed, with many loves and regards to dear Lady Clavering, to pass some time with dearest Blanche.

Dearest Blanche wrote instantly in reply to dearest Laura's No. 1, to say with what extreme delight she should welcome her sister: how charming it would be to practise their old duets together, to wander o'er the grassy sward, and amidst the yellowing woods of Penshurst and Southborough! Blanche counted the hours till she should embrace her dearest friend.

Laura, No. 2, expressed her delight at dearest Blanche's affectionate reply. She hoped that their friendship would never diminish; that the confidence between them would grow in after years; that they should have no secrets from each other; that the aim of the life of each would be to make one person happy.

Blanche, No. 2, followed in two days. "How provoking! Their house was very small, the two spare bedrooms were occupied by that horrid Mrs. Planter and her daughter, who had thought proper to fall ill (she always fell ill in country-houses), and she could not or would not be moved for some days."

Laura, No. 3. "It was indeed very provoking. L. had hoped to hear one of dearest B.'s dear songs on Friday: but she was the more consoled to wait, because Lady R. was not very well, and liked to be nursed by

her. Poor Major Pendennis was very unwell, too, in the same hotel—too unwell even to see Arthur, who was constant in his calls on his uncle. Arthur's heart was full of tenderness and affection. She had known Arthur all her life. She would answer"—yes, even in italics she would answer—" for his kindness, his goodness, and his gentleness."

Blanche, No. 3. " What is this most surprising, most extraordinary letter from A. P.? What does dearest Laura know about it? What has happened? What, what mystery is enveloped under his frightful reserve? "

Blanche, No. 3, requires an explanation; and it cannot be better given than in the surprising and mysterious letter of Arthur Pendennis.

CHAPTER LXXII

MR. AND MRS. SAM HUXTER

"EAR BLANCHE," Arthur wrote, "you are always reading and dreaming pretty dramas, and exciting romances in real life, are you now prepared to enact a part of one? And not the pleasantest part, dear Blanche, that in which the heroine takes possession of her father's palace and wealth, and introducing her husband to the loyal retainers and faithful vassals, greets her happy bridegroom with 'All of this is mine and thine,'—but the other character, that of the luckless lady, who suddenly discovers that she is not the Prince's wife, but Claude Melnotte's the beggar's: that of Alnaschar's wife, who comes in just as her husband has kicked over the tray of porcelain which was to be the making of his fortune—But stay; Alnaschar, who kicked down the china, was not a married man; he had cast his eye on the Vizier's daughter, and his hopes of her went to the ground with the shattered bowls and tea-cups.

"Will you be the Vizier's daughter, and refuse and

laugh to scorn Alnaschar, or will you be the Lady of Lyons, and love the penniless Claude Melnotte? I will act that part if you like. I will love you my best in return. I will do my all to make your humble life happy: for humble it will be: at least the odds are against any other conclusion; we shall live and die in a poor prosy humdrum way. There will be no stars and epaulettes for the hero of our story. I shall write one or two more stories, which will presently be forgotten. I shall be called to the Bar, and try to get on in my profession; perhaps some day, if I am very lucky, and work very hard (which is absurd), I may get a colonial appointment, and you may be an Indian Judge's lady. Meanwhile I shall buy back the "Pall Mall Gazette;" the publishers are tired of it since the death of poor Shandon, and will sell it for a small sum. Warrington will be my right hand, and write it up to a respectable sale. I will introduce you to Mr. Finucane the sub-editor, and I know who in the end will be Mrs. Finucane,—a very nice gentle creature, who has lived sweetly through a sad life—and we will jog on, I say, and look out for better times, and earn our living decently. You shall have the opera-boxes, and superintend the fashionable intelligence, and break your little heart in the poet's corner. Shall we live over the offices?—there are four very good rooms, a kitchen, and a garret for Laura, in Catherine Street in the Strand; or would you like a house in the Waterloo Road?—it would be very pleasant, only there is that halfpenny toll at the Bridge. The boys may go to King's College, mayn't they? Does all this read to you like a joke?

"Ah, dear Blanche, it is no joke, and I am sober and telling the truth. Our fine day-dreams are gone. Our

carriage has whirled out of sight like Cinderella's: our house in Belgravia has been whisked away into the air by a malevolent Genius, and I am no more a Member of Parliament, than I am a Bishop on his bench in the House of Lords, or a Duke with a Garter at his knee. You know pretty well what my property is, and your own little fortune: we may have enough with those two to live in decent comfort: to take a cab sometimes when we go out to see our friends, and not to deny ourselves an omnibus when we are tired. But that is all: is that enough for you, my little dainty lady? I doubt sometimes whether you can bear the life I offer you—at least, it is fair that you should know what it will be. If you say, 'Yes, Arthur, I will follow your fate, whatever it may be, and be a loyal and loving wife to aid and cheer you'—come to me, dear Blanche, and may God help me so that I may do my duty to you. If not, and you look to a higher station, I must not bar Blanche's fortune—I will stand in the crowd, and see your ladyship go to Court when you are presented, and you shall give me a smile from your chariot window. I saw Lady Mirabel going to the drawing-room last season: the happy husband at her side glittered with stars and cordons. All the flowers in the garden bloomed in the coachman's bosom. Will you have these and the chariot, or walk on foot and mend your husband's stockings?

"I cannot tell you now—afterwards I might, should the day come when we may have no secrets from one another—what has happened within the last few hours which has changed all my prospects in life: but so it is, that I have learned something which forces me to give up the plans which I had formed, and many vain and ambitious hopes in which I had been indulging. I have

written and despatched a letter to Sir Francis Clavering, saying that I cannot accept his seat in Parliament until after my marriage; in like manner I cannot and will not accept any larger fortune with you than that which has always belonged to you since your grandfather's death, and the birth of your half-brother. Your good mother is not in the least aware—I hope she never may be—of the reasons which force me to this very strange decision. They arise from a painful circumstance, which is attributable to none of our faults; but, having once befallen, they are as fatal and irreparable as that shock which overset honest Alnaschar's porcelain, and shattered all his hopes beyond the power of mending. I write gaily enough, for there is no use in bewailing such a hopeless mischance. We have not drawn the great prize in the lottery, dear Blanche: but I shall be contented enough without it, if you can be so; and I repeat, with all my heart, that I will do my best to make you happy.

"And now, what news shall I give you? My uncle is very unwell, and takes my refusal of the seat in Parliament in sad dudgeon: the scheme was his, poor old gentleman, and he naturally bemoans its failure. But Warrington, Laura, and I had a council of war: they know this awful secret, and back me in my decision. You must love George as you love what is generous and upright and noble; and as for Laura—she must be our Sister, Blanche, our Saint, our good Angel. With two such friends at home, what need we care for the world without, or who is member for Clavering, or who is asked or not asked to the great balls of the season?"

To this frank communication came back the letter from Blanche to Laura, and one to Pen himself, which

perhaps his own letter justified. "You are spoiled by the world," Blanche wrote; "you do not love your poor Blanche as she would be loved, or you would not offer thus lightly to take her or to leave her. No, Arthur, you love me not—a man of the world, you have given me your plighted troth, and are ready to redeem it; but that entire affection, that love whole and abiding, where—where is that vision of my youth? I am but a pastime of your life, and I would be its all;—but a fleeting thought, and I would be your whole soul. I would have our two hearts one; but ah, my Arthur, how lonely yours is! how little you give me of it! You speak of our parting with a smile on your lip; of our meeting, and you care not to hasten it! Is life but a disillusion, then, and are the flowers of our garden faded away? I have wept —I have prayed—I have passed sleepless hours—I have shed bitter, bitter tears over your letter! To you I bring the gushing poesy of my being—the yearnings of the soul that longs to be loved—that pines for love, love, love, beyond all!—that flings itself at your feet, and cries, Love me, Arthur! Your heart beats no quicker at the kneeling appeal of my love!—your proud eye is dimmed by no tear of sympathy!—you accept my soul's treasure as though 'twere dross! not the pearls from the unfathomable deeps of affection! not the diamonds from the caverns of the heart. You treat me like a slave, and bid me bow to my master! Is this the guerdon of a free maiden—is this the price of a life's passion? Ah me! when was it otherwise? when did love meet with aught but disappointment? Could I hope (fond fool!) to be the exception to the lot of my race; and lay my fevered brow on a heart that comprehended my own? Foolish girl that I was! One by one, all the

flowers of my young life have faded away; and this, the last, the sweetest, the dearest, the fondly, the madly loved, the wildly cherished—where is it? But no more of this. Heed not my bleeding heart.—Bless you, bless you always, Arthur!

"I will write more when I am more collected. My racking brain renders thought almost impossible. I long to see Laura! She will come to us directly we return from the country, will she not? And you, cold one!

"B."

The words of this letter were perfectly clear, and written in Blanche's neatest hand upon her scented paper; and yet the meaning of the composition not a little puzzled Pen. Did Blanche mean to accept or to refuse his polite offer? Her phrases either meant that Pen did not love her, and she declined him, or that she took him, and sacrificed herself to him, cold as he was. He laughed sardonically over the letter, and over the transaction which occasioned it. He laughed to think how Fortune had jilted him, and how he deserved his slippery fortune. He turned over and over the musky gilt-edged riddle. It amused his humour: he enjoyed it as if it had been a funny story.

He was thus seated, twiddling the queer manuscript in his hand, joking grimly to himself, when his servant came in with a card from a gentleman, who wished to speak to him very particularly. And if Pen had gone out into the passage, he would have seen sucking his stick, rolling his eyes, and showing great marks of anxiety, his old acquaintance, Mr. Samuel Huxter.

"Mr. Huxter on particular business! Pray, beg Mr. Huxter to come in," said Pen, amused rather; and not the less so when poor Sam appeared before him.

"Pray take a chair, Mr. Huxter," said Pen, in his most superb manner. "In what way can I be of service to you?"

"I had rather not speak before the flunk—before the

man, Mr. Pendennis:" on which Mr. Arthur's attendant quitted the room.

"I'm in a fix," said Mr. Huxter, gloomily.

"Indeed."

"*She* sent me to you," continued the young surgeon.

"What! Fanny? Is she well? I was coming to see her, but I have had a great deal of business since my return to London."

"I heard of you through my governor and Jack Hobnell," broke in Huxter. "I wish you joy, Mr. Penden-

nis, both of the borough and the lady, sir. Fanny wishes you joy, too," he added, with something of a blush.

"There's many a slip between the cup and the lip! Who knows what may happen, Mr. Huxter, or who will sit in Parliament for Clavering next session?"

"You can do anything with my governor," continued Mr. Huxter. "You got him Clavering Park. The old boy was very much pleased, sir, at your calling him in. Hobnell wrote me so. Do you think you could speak to the governor for me, Mr. Pendennis?"

"And tell him what?"

"I've gone and done it, sir," said Huxter, with a particular look.

"You—you don't mean to say you have—you have done any wrong to that dear little creature, sir?" said Pen, starting up in a great fury.

"I hope not," said Huxter, with a hang-dog look: "but I've married her. And I know there will be an awful shindy at home. It was agreed that I should be taken into partnership when I had passed the College, and it was to have been Huxter & Son. But I *would* have it, confound it. It's all over now, and the old boy's wrote me that he's coming up to town for drugs: he will be here to-morrow, and then it must all come out."

"And when did this event happen?" asked Pen, not over well pleased, most likely, that a person who had once attracted some portion of his royal good graces should have transferred her allegiance, and consoled herself for his loss.

"Last Thursday was five weeks—it was two days after Miss Amory came to Shepherd's Inn," Huxter answered.

Pen remembered that Blanche had written and mentioned her visit. "I was called in," Huxter said. "I was in the inn looking after old Cos's leg; and about something else too, very likely: and I met Strong, who told me there was a woman taken ill in chambers, and went up to give her my professional services. It was the old lady who attends Miss Amory—her housekeeper, or some such thing. She was taken with strong hysterics: I found her kicking and scratching like a good one—in Strong's chamber, along with him and Colonel Altamont, and Miss Amory crying and as pale as a sheet; and Altamont fuming about—a regular kick up. They were two hours in the chambers; and the old woman went whooping off in a cab. She was much worse than the young one. I called in Grosvenor Place next day to see if I could be of any service, but they were gone without so much as thanking me: and the day after I had business of my own to attend to—a bad business too," said Mr. Huxter, gloomily. "But it's done, and can't be undone; and we must make the best of it."

She has known the story for a month, thought Pen, with a sharp pang of grief, and a gloomy sympathy—this accounts for her letter of to-day. She will not implicate her father, or divulge his secret; she wishes to let me off from the marriage—and finds a pretext—the generous girl!

"Do you know who Altamont is, sir?" asked Huxter, after the pause during which Pen had been thinking of his own affairs. "Fanny and I have talked him over, and we can't help fancying that it's Mrs. Lightfoot's first husband come to life again, and she who has just married a second. Perhaps Lightfoot won't be very sorry for it," sighed Huxter, looking savagely at Ar-

thur, for the demon of jealousy was still in possession of his soul; and now, and more than ever since his marriage, the poor fellow fancied that Fanny's heart belonged to his rival.

"Let us talk about your affairs," said Pen. "Show me how I can be of any service to you, Huxter. Let me congratulate you on your marriage. I am thankful that Fanny, who is so good, so fascinating, so kind a creature, has found an honest man, and a gentleman who will make her happy. Show me what I can do to help you."

"She thinks you can, sir," said Huxter, accepting Pen's proffered hand, "and I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure; and that you might talk over my father, and break the business to him, and my mother, who always has her back up about being a clergyman's daughter. Fanny ain't of a good family, I know, and not up to us in breeding and that—but she's a Huxter now."

"The wife takes the husband's rank, of course," said Pen.

"And with a little practice in society," continued Huxter, imbibing his stick, "she'll be as good as any girl in Clavering. You should hear her sing and play on the piano. Did you ever? Old Bows taught her. And she'll do on the stage, if the governor was to throw me over; but I'd rather not have her there. She can't help being a coquette, Mr. Pendennis, she can't help it. Dammy, sir! I'll be bound to say, that two or three of the Bartholomew chaps, that I've brought into my place, are sitting with her now: even Jack Linton, that I took down as my best man, is as bad as the rest, and she will go on singing and making eyes at him. It's what Bows says, if there were twenty men in a room, and one not

taking notice of her, she wouldn't be satisfied until the twentieth was at her elbow."

"You should have her mother with her," said Pen, laughing.

"She must keep the lodge. She can't see so much of her family as she used. I can't, you know, sir, go on with that lot. Consider my rank in life," said Huxter, putting a very dirty hand up to his chin.

"Au fait," said Mr. Pen, who was infinitely amused, and concerning whom *mutato nomine* (and of course concerning nobody else in the world) the fable might have been narrated.

As the two gentlemen were in the midst of this colloquy, another knock came to Pen's door, and his servant presently announced Mr. Bows. The old man followed slowly, his pale face blushing, and his hand trembling somewhat as he took Pen's. He coughed, and wiped his face in his checked cotton pocket-handkerchief, and sate down with his hands on his knees, the sun shining on his bald head. Pen looked at the homely figure with no small sympathy and kindness. This man, too, has had his griefs, and his wounds, Arthur thought. This man, too, has brought his genius and his heart, and laid them at a woman's feet; where she spurned them. The chance of life has gone against him, and the prize is with that creature yonder. Fanny's bridegroom, thus mutely apostrophised, had winked meanwhile with one eye at old Bows, and was driving holes in the floor with the cane which he loved.

"So we have lost, Mr. Bows, and here is the lucky winner," Pen said, looking hard at the old man.

"Here is the lucky winner, sir, as you say."

"I suppose you have come from my place?" asked

Huxter, who, having winked at Bows with one eye, now favoured Pen with a wink of the other—a wink which seemed to say, "Infatuated old boy—you understand—over head and ears in love with her—poor old fool!"

"Yes, I have been there ever since you went away. It was Mrs. Sam who sent me after you: who said that she thought you might be doing something stupid—something like yourself, Huxter."

"There's as big fools as I am," growled the young surgeon.

"A few, p'raps," said the old man; "not many, let us trust. Yes, she sent me after you for fear you should offend Mr. Pendennis; and I dare say because she thought you wouldn't give her message to him, and beg him to go and see her; and she knew *I* would take her errand. Did he tell you that, sir?"

Huxter blushed scarlet, and covered his confusion with an imprecation. Pen laughed! the scene suited his bitter humour more and more.

"I have no doubt Mr. Huxter was going to tell me," Arthur said, "and very much flattered I am sure I shall be to pay my respects to his wife."

"It's in Charterhouse Lane, over the baker's, on the right-hand side as you go from St. John's Street," continued Bows, without any pity. "You know Smithfield, Mr. Pendennis? St. John's Street leads into Smithfield. Doctor Johnson has been down the street many a time with ragged shoes, and a bundle of penny-a-lining for the 'Gent's Magazine.' You literary gents are better off now—eh? You ride in your cabs, and wear yellow kid gloves now."

"I have known so many brave and good men fail, and so many quacks and impostors succeed, that you

mistake me if you think I am puffed up by my own personal good luck, old friend," Arthur said, sadly. "Do *you* think the prizes of life are carried by the most deserving? and set up that mean test of prosperity for merit? You must feel that you are as good as I. I have never questioned it. It is you that are peevish against the freaks of fortune, and grudge the good luck that befalls others. It's not the first time you have unjustly accused me, Bows."

"Perhaps you are not far from wrong, sir," said the old fellow, wiping his bald forehead. "I am thinking about myself and grumbling; most men do when they get on that subject. Here's the fellow that's got the prize in the lottery; here's the fortunate youth."

"I don't know what you are driving at," Huxter said, who had been much puzzled as the above remarks passed between his two companions.

"Perhaps not," said Bows, drily. "Mrs. H. sent me here to look after you, and to see that you brought that little message to Mr. Pendennis, which you didn't, you see, and so she was right. Women always are; they have always a reason for everything. Why, sir," he said, turning round to Pen with a sneer, "she had a reason even for giving me that message. I was sitting with her after you left us, very quiet and comfortable; I was talking away, and she was mending your shirts, when your two young friends, Jack Linton and Bob Blades, looked in from Bartholomew's; and then it was she found out that she had this message to send. You needn't hurry yourself, she don't want you back again; they'll stay these two hours, I dare say."

Huxter arose with great perturbation at this news,

and plunged his stick into the pocket of his paletot, and seized his hat.

"You'll come and see us, sir, won't you?" he said to Pen. "You'll talk over the governor, won't you, sir, if I can get out of this place and down to Clavering?"

"You will promise to attend me gratis if ever I fall ill at Fairoaks, will you, Huxter?" Pen said, good-naturedly. "I will do anything I can for you. I will come and see Mrs. Huxter immediately, and we will conspire together about what is to be done."

"I thought that would send him out, sir," Bows said, dropping into his chair again as soon as the young surgeon had quitted the room. "And it 's all true, sir—every word of it. She wants you back again, and sends her husband after you. She cajoles everybody, the little devil. She tries it on you, on me, on poor Costigan, on the young chaps from Bartholomew's. She's got a little court of 'em already. And if there's nobody there, she practises on the old German baker in the shop, or coaxes the black sweeper at the crossing."

"Is she fond of that fellow?" asked Pen.

"There is no accounting for likes and dislikes," Bows answered. "Yes, she is fond of him; and having taken the thing into her head, she would not rest until she married him. They had their banns published at St. Clement's, and nobody heard it or knew any just cause or impediment. And one day she slips out of the porter's lodge and has the business done, and goes off to Gravesend with Lothario; and leaves a note for me to go and explain all things to her ma. Bless you! the old woman knew it as well as I did, though she pretended igno-

rance. And so she goes, and I'm alone again. I miss her, sir, tripping along that court, and coming for her singing lesson; and I've no heart to look into the porter's lodge now, which looks very empty without her, the little flirting thing. And I go and sit and dangle about her lodgings, like an old fool. She makes 'em very trim and nice, though; gets up all Huxter's shirts and clothes: cooks his little dinner, and sings at her business like a little lark. What's the use of being angry? I lent 'em three pound to go on with: for they haven't got a shilling till the reconciliation, and pa comes down."

When Bows had taken his leave, Pen carried his letter from Blanche, and the news which he had just received, to his usual adviser, Laura. It was wonderful upon how many points Mr. Arthur, who generally followed his own opinion, now wanted another person's counsel. He could hardly so much as choose a waistcoat without referring to Miss Bell: if he wanted to buy a horse, he must have Miss Bell's opinion; all which marks of deference tended greatly to the amusement of the shrewd old lady with whom Miss Bell lived, and whose plans regarding her *protégée* we have indicated.

Arthur produced Blanche's letter then to Laura, and asked her to interpret it. Laura was very much agitated, and puzzled by the contents of the note.

"It seems to me," she said, "as if Blanche is acting very artfully."

"And wishes so to place matters that she may take me or leave me? Is it not so?"

"It is, I am afraid, a kind of duplicity which does not augur well for your future happiness: and is a bad reply to your own candour and honesty, Arthur. Do you know, I think, I think—I scarcely like to say what

I think," said Laura, with a deep blush; but of course the blushing young lady yielded to her cousin's persuasions, and expressed what her thoughts were. " It looks to me, Arthur, as if there might be—there might be somebody else," said Laura, with a repetition of the blush.

" And if there is," broke in Arthur, " and if I am free once again, will the best and dearest of all women—"

" You are not free, dear brother," Laura said calmly. " You belong to another; of whom I own it grieves me to think ill. But I can't do otherwise. It is very odd that in this letter she does not urge you to tell her the reason why you have broken arrangements which would have been so advantageous to you; and avoids speaking on the subject. She somehow seems to write as if she knows her father's secret."

Pen said, " Yes, she must know it; " and told the story, which he had just heard from Huxter, of the interview at Shepherd's Inn.

" It was not so that she described the meeting," said Laura; and going to her desk, produced from it that letter of Blanche's which mentioned her visit to Shepherd's Inn. "Another disappointment—only the Chevalier Strong and a friend of his in the room." This was all that Blanche had said. " But she was bound to keep her father's secret, Pen," Laura added. " And yet, and yet—it is very puzzling."

The puzzle was this, that for three weeks after this eventful discovery Blanche had been only too eager about her dearest Arthur; was urging, as strongly as so much modesty could urge, the completion of the happy arrangements which were to make her Arthur's for ever; and now it seemed as if something had interfered to mar

these happy arrangements—as if Arthur poor was not quite so agreeable to Blanche as Arthur rich and a member of Parliament—as if there was some mystery. At last she said—

"Tunbridge Wells is not very far off, is it, Arthur? Hadn't you better go and see her?"

They had been in town a week, and neither had thought of that simple plan before!

CHAPTER LXXIII

SHOWS HOW ARTHUR HAD BETTER HAVE TAKEN A RETURN-TICKET

THE train carried Arthur only too quickly to Tunbridge, though he had time to review all the circumstances of his life as he made the brief journey; and to acknowledge to what sad conclusions his selfishness and waywardness had led him. "Here is the end of hopes and aspirations," thought he, "of romance and ambitions! Where I yield or where I am obstinate, I am alike unfortunate; my mother implores me, and I refuse an angel! Say I had taken her; forced on me as she was, Laura would never have been an angel to me. I could not have given her my heart at anothers' instigation; I could never have known her as she is, had I been obliged to ask another to interpret her qualities and point out her virtues. I yield to my uncle's solicitations, and accept on his guarantee Blanche, and a seat in Parliament, and wealth, and ambition and a career; and see!—fortune comes and leaves me the wife without the dowry, which I had taken in compensation of a heart.

Why was I not more honest, or am I not less so? It would have cost my poor old uncle no pangs to accept Blanche's fortune whencesoever it came; he can't even understand, he is bitterly indignant, heart-stricken almost, at the scruples which actuate me in refusing it. I dissatisfy everybody. A maimed, weak, imperfect wretch, it seems as if I am unequal to any fortune. I neither make myself nor any one connected with me happy. What prospect is there for this poor little frivolous girl, who is to take my obscure name and share my fortune? I have not even ambition to excite me, or self-esteem enough to console myself, much more her, for my failure. If I were to write a book that should go through twenty editions, why, I should be the very first to sneer at my reputation. Say I could succeed at the Bar, and achieve a fortune by bullying witnesses and twisting evidence; is that a fame which would satisfy my longings, or a calling in which my life would be well spent? How I wish I could be that priest opposite, who never has lifted his eyes from his breviary, except when we were in Reigate tunnel, when he could not see; or that old gentleman next him, who scowls at him with eyes of hatred over his newspaper. The priest shuts his eyes to the world, but has his thoughts on the book, which is his directory to the world to come. His neighbour hates him as a monster, tyrant, persecutor, and fancies burning martyrs, and that pale countenance looking on, and lighted up by the flame. These have no doubts; these march on trustfully, bearing their load of logic."

"Would you like to look at the paper, sir?" here interposed the stout gentleman (it had a flaming article against the order of the black-coated gentleman who was travelling with them in the carriage), and Pen thanked

him and took it, and pursued his reverie, without reading two sentences of the journal.

"And yet, would you take either of those men's creeds, with its consequences?" he thought. "Ah me! you must bear your own burthen, fashion your own faith, think your own thoughts, and pray your own prayer. To what mortal ear could I tell all, if I had a mind? or who could understand all? Who can tell another's shortcomings, lost opportunities, weigh the passions which overpower, the defects which incapacitate reason?—what extent of truth and right his neighbour's mind is organised to perceive and to do?—what invisible and forgotten accident, terror of youth, chance or mischance of fortune, may have altered the current of life? A grain of sand may alter it, as the flinging of a pebble may end it. Who can weigh circumstances, passions, temptations, that go to our good and evil account, save One, before whose awful wisdom we kneel, and at whose mercy we ask absolution? Here it ends," thought Pen; "this day or to-morrow will wind up the account of my youth; a weary retrospect, alas! a sad history, with many a page I would fain not look back on! But who has not been tired or fallen, and who has escaped without scars from that struggle?" And his head fell on his breast, and the young man's heart prostrated itself humbly and sadly before that Throne where sit wisdom, and love, and pity for all, and made its confession. "What matters about fame or poverty?" he thought. "If I marry this woman I have chosen, may I have strength and will to be true to her, and to make her happy! If I have children, pray God teach me to speak and to do the truth among them, and to leave them an honest name. There are no splendours for my marriage. Does my life de-

serve any? I begin a new phase of it; a better than the last may it be, I pray Heaven!"

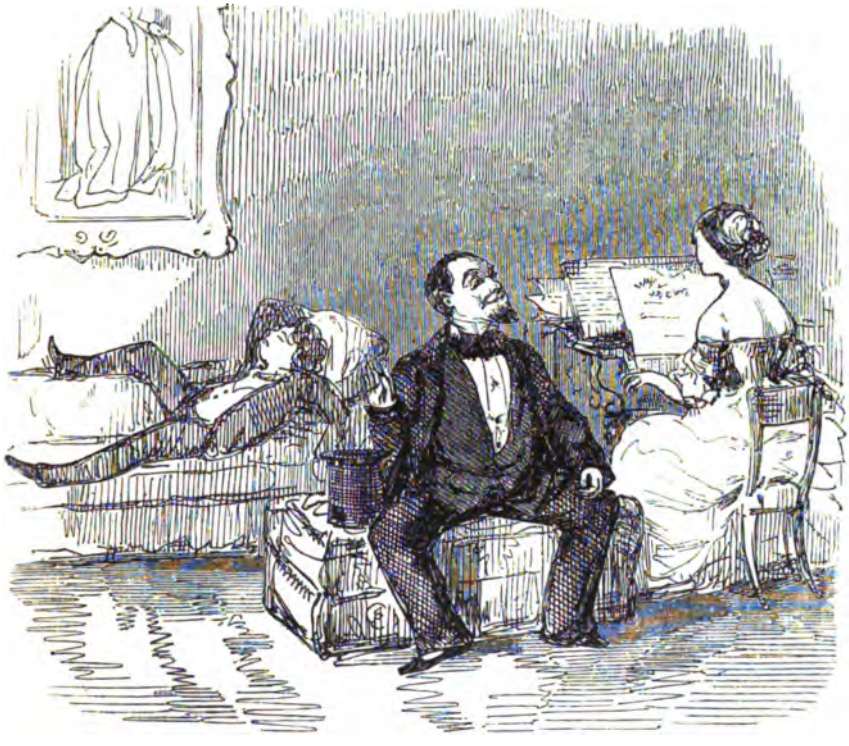
The train stopped at Tunbridge as Pen was making these reflections; and he handed over the newspaper to his neighbour, of whom he took leave, while the foreign clergyman in the opposite corner still sate with his eyes on his book. Pen jumped out of the carriage then, his carpet-bag in hand, and briskly determined to face his fortune.

A fly carried him rapidly to Lady Clavering's house from the station; and, as he was transported thither, Arthur composed a little speech, which he intended to address to Blanche, and which was really as virtuous, honest, and well-minded an oration as any man of his turn of mind, and under his circumstances, could have uttered. The purport of it was—"Blanche, I cannot understand from your last letter what your meaning is, or whether my fair and frank proposal to you is acceptable or no. I think you know the reason which induces me to forego the worldly advantages which a union with you offered, and which I could not accept without, as I fancy, being dishonoured. If you doubt of my affection, here I am ready to prove it. Let Smirke be called in, and let us be married out of hand; and with all my heart I purpose to keep my vow, and to cherish you through life, and to be a true and a loving husband to you."

From the fly Arthur sprang out then to the hall-door, where he was met by a domestic whom he did not know. The man seemed to be surprised at the approach of the gentleman with the carpet-bag, which he made no attempt to take from Arthur's hands. "Her ladyship's not at home, sir," the man remarked.

"I am Mr. Pendennis," Arthur said. "Where is Lightfoot?"

"Lightfoot is gone," answered the man. "My Lady is out, and my orders was—"



"I hear Miss Amory's voice in the drawing-room," said Arthur. "Take the bag to a dressing-room, if you please;" and, passing by the porter, he walked straight towards that apartment, from which, as the door opened, a warble of melodious notes issued.

Our little Siren was at her piano, singing with all her might and fascinations. Master Clavering was asleep

on the sofa, indifferent to the music; but near Blanche sat a gentleman who was perfectly enraptured with her strain, which was of a passionate and melancholy nature.

As the door opened, the gentleman started up with a Hullo! the music stopped, with a little shriek from the singer; Frank Clavering woke up from the sofa, and Arthur came forward and said, "What, Foker! how do you do, Foker?" He looked at the piano, and there, by Miss Amory's side, was just such another purple-leather box as he had seen in Harry's hand three days before, when the heir of Logwood was coming out of a jeweller's shop in Waterloo Place. It was opened, and curled round the white satin cushion within was, oh, such a magnificent serpentine bracelet, with such a blazing ruby head and diamond tail!

"How de-do, Pendennis?" said Foker. Blanche made many motions of the shoulders, and gave signs of interest and agitation. And she put her handkerchief over the bracelet, and then she advanced, with a hand which trembled very much, to greet Pen.

"How is dearest Laura?" she said. The face of Foker looking up from his profound mourning—that face, so piteous and puzzled, was one which the reader's imagination must depict for himself; also that of Master Frank Clavering, who, looking at the three interesting individuals with an expression of the utmost knowingness, had only time to ejaculate the words, "Here's a jolly go!" and to disappear sniggering.

Pen, too, had restrained himself up to that minute; but looking still at Foker, whose ears and cheeks tingled with blushes, Arthur burst out into a fit of laughter, so wild and loud, that it frightened Blanche much more than any the most serious exhibition.

"And this was the secret, was it? Don't blush and turn away, Foker, my boy. Why, man, you are a pattern of fidelity. Could I stand between Blanche and such constancy—could I stand between Miss Amory and fifteen thousand a year?"

"It is not that, Mr. Pendennis," Blanche said, with great dignity. "It is not money, it is not rank, it is not gold that moves *me;* but it *is* constancy, it is fidelity, it is a whole trustful loving heart offered to me, that I treasure—yes, that I treasure!" And she made for her handkerchief, but, reflecting what was underneath it, she paused. "I do not disown, I do not disguise —my life is above disguise—to him on whom it is bestowed, my heart must be for ever bare—that I once thought I loved you,—yes, thought I was beloved by you!—I own. How I clung to that faith! How I strove, I prayed, I longed to believe it! But your conduct always—your own words so cold, so heartless, so unkind, have undeceived me. You trifled with the heart of the poor maiden! You flung me back with scorn the troth which I had plighted! I have explained all—all to Mr. Foker."

"That you have," said Foker, with devotion, and conviction in his looks.

"What! all?" said Pen, with a meaning look at Blanche. "It is I am in fault, is it? Well, well, Blanche, be it so. I won't appeal against your sentence, and bear it in silence. I came down here looking to very different things, Heaven knows, and with a heart most truly and kindly disposed towards you. I hope you may be happy with another, as, on my word, it was my wish to make you so; and I hope my honest old friend here will have a wife worthy of his loyalty, his constancy, and

affection. Indeed they deserve the regard of any woman —even Miss Blanche Amory. Shake hands, Harry; don't look askance at me. Has anybody told you that I was a false and heartless character?"

"I think you're a—" Foker was beginning, in his wrath, when Blanche interposed.

"Henry, not a word!—I pray you let there be forgiveness!"

"You're an angel, by Jove, you're an angel!" said Foker, at which Blanche looked seraphically up to the chandelier.

"In spite of what has passed, for the sake of what has passed, I must always regard Arthur as a brother," the seraph continued; "we have known each other years, we have trodden the same fields, and plucked the same flowers together. Arthur! Henry! I beseech you to take hands and to be friends! Forgive you!—*I* forgive you, Arthur, with my heart I do. Should I not do so for making me so happy?"

"There is only one person of us three whom I pity, Blanche," Arthur said, gravely; "and I say to you again, that I hope you will make this good fellow, this honest and loyal creature, happy."

"Happy! O Heavens!" said Harry. He could not speak. His happiness gushed out at his eyes. "She don't know—she can't know how fond I am of her, and —and who am I? a poor little beggar, and she takes me up and says she'll try and l—l—love me. I ain't worthy of so much happiness. Give us your hand, old boy, since she forgives you after your heartless conduct, and says she loves you. I'll make you welcome. I tell you I'll love everybody who loves her. By — if she tells me to kiss the ground I'll kiss it. Tell me to kiss the ground! I say, tell me. I love you so. You see I love you so."

Blanche looked up seraphically again. Her gentle bosom heaved. She held out one hand as if to bless Harry, and then royally permitted him to kiss it. She took up the pocket-handkerchief and hid her own eyes, as the other fair hand was abandoned to poor Harry's tearful embrace.

"I swear that is a villain who deceives such a loving creature as that," said Pen.

Blanche laid down the handkerchief, and put hand No. 2 softly on Foker's head, which was bent down kissing and weeping over hand No. 1. "Foolish boy," she said, "it shall be loved as it deserves: who could help loving such a silly creature?"

And at this moment Frank Clavering broke in upon the sentimental trio.

"I say, Pendennis," he said.

"Well, Frank!"

"The man wants to be paid, and go back. He's had some beer."

"I'll go back with him," cried Pen. "Good-by, Blanche. God bless you, Foker, old friend. You know neither of you want me here." He longed to be off that instant.

"Stay—I must say one word to you. One word in private, if you please," Blanche said. "You can trust us together, can't you,—Henry?" The tone in which the word Henry was spoken, and the appeal, ravished Foker with delight. "Trust you!" said he. "Oh, who wouldn't trust you! Come along, Franky, my boy."

"Let's have a cigar," said Frank, as they went into the hall.

"She don't like it," said Foker, gently.

"Law bless you—*she* don't mind. Pendennis used to smoke regular," said the candid youth.

"It was but a short word I had to say," said Blanche to Pen, with great calm, when they were alone. "You never loved me, Mr. Pendennis."

"I told you how much," said Arthur. "I never deceived you."

"I suppose you will go back and marry Laura," continued Blanche.

"Was that what you had to say?" said Pen.

"You are going to her this very night, I am sure of it. There is no denying it. You never cared for me."

"*Et vous?*"

"*Et moi, c'est différent.* I have been spoilt early. I cannot live out of the world, out of excitement. I could have done so, but it is too late. If I cannot have emotions, I must have the world. You would offer me neither one nor the other. You are *blasé* in everything, even in ambition. You had a career before you, and you would not take it. You give it up!—for what?—for a *bêtise,* for an absurd scruple. Why would you not have that seat, and be such a *puritain?* Why should you refuse what is mine by right—by right, *entendez-vous?*"

"You know all, then?" said Pen.

"Only within a month. But I have suspected ever since Baymouth—*n'importe* since when. It is not too late. He is as if he had never been; and there is a position in the world before you yet. Why not sit in Parliament, exert your talent, and give a place in the world to yourself, to your wife? I take *celui-là. Il est bon. Il est riche. Il est—vous le connaissez autant que moi, enfin.* Think you that I would not prefer *un homme qui fera parler de moi?* If the secret appears, I am rich *à millions.* How does it affect me? It is not my fault. It will never appear."

"You will tell Harry everything, won't you?"

"*Je comprends. Vous refusez,*" said Blanche, savagely. "I will tell Harry at my own time, when we are married. You will not betray me, will you? You, having a defenceless girl's secret, will not turn upon her and use it? *S'il me plait de la cacher, mon secret; pourquoi le donnerai-je? Je l'aime, mon pauvre père, voyez-vous?* I would rather live with that man than with you *fades* intriguers of the world. I must have emotions—*il m'en donne. Il m'écrit. Il écrit très-bien, voyez-vous—comme un pirate—comme un Bohémien—comme un homme.* But for this I would have said to my mother—*Ma mère! quittons ce lâche mari, cette lâche société—retournons à mon père.*"

"The pirate would have wearied you like the rest," said Pen.

"*Eh! Il me faut des émotions,*" said Blanche. Pen had never seen her or known so much about her in all the years of their intimacy as he saw and knew now: though he saw more than existed in reality. For this young lady was not able to carry out any emotion to the full; but had a sham enthusiasm, a sham hatred, a sham love, a sham taste, a sham grief, each of which flared and shone very vehemently for an instant, but subsided and gave place to the next sham emotion.

CHAPTER LXXIV

A CHAPTER OF MATCH-MAKING

UPON the platform at Tunbridge, Pen fumed and fretted until the arrival of the evening train to London, a full half hour,—six hours it seemed to him; but even this immense interval was passed, the train arrived, the train sped on, the London lights came in view—a gentleman who forgot his carpet-bag in the train rushed at a cab, and said to the man, "Drive as hard as you can go to Jermyn Street." The cabman, although a Hansom cabman, said "Thank you" for the gratuity which was put into his hand, and Pen ran up the stairs of the hotel to Lady Rockminster's apartments. Laura was alone in the drawing-room, reading, with a pale face, by the lamp. The pale face looked up when Pen opened the door. May we follow him? The great moments of life are but moments like the others. Your doom is spoken in a word or two. A single look from the eyes, a mere pressure of the hand, may decide it; or of the lips, though they cannot speak.

When Lady Rockminster, who has had her after-

dinner nap, gets up and goes into her sitting-room, we may enter with her ladyship.

"Upon my word, young people!" are the first words she says, and her attendant makes wondering eyes over her shoulder. And well may she say so; and well may the attendant cast wondering eyes; for the young people are in an attitude, and Pen in such a position as every young lady who reads this has heard tell of, or has seen, or hopes, or at any rate deserves to see.

In a word, directly he entered the room, Pen went up to Laura of the pale face, who had not time even to say, What, back so soon? and seizing her outstretched and trembling hand just as she was rising from her chair, fell down on his knees before her, and said quickly, "I have seen her. She has engaged herself to Harry Foker —and—and NOW, Laura?"

The hand gives a pressure—the eyes beam a reply—the quivering lips answer, though speechless. Pen's head sinks down in the girl's lap, as he sobs out, "Come and bless us, dear mother!" and arms as tender as Helen's once more enfold him.

In this juncture it is that Lady Rockminster comes in and says, "Upon my word, young people! Beck! leave the room. What do *you* want poking your nose in here?"

Pen starts up with looks of triumph, still holding Laura's hand. "She is consoling me for my misfortune, ma'am," he says.

"What do you mean by kissing her hand? I don't know what you will be next doing."

Pen kissed her ladyship's. "*I* have been to Tunbridge," he says, "and seen Miss Amory; and find on

my arrival that—that a villain has transplanted me in her affections," he says with a tragedy air.

"Is that all? Is that what you were whimpering on your knees about?" says the old lady, growing angry. "You might have kept the news till to-morrow."

"Yes—another has superseded me," goes on Pen; "but why call him villain? He is brave, he is constant, he is young, he is wealthy, he is beautiful."

"What stuff are you talking, sir?" cried the old lady. "What has happened?"

"Miss Amory has jilted me, and accepted Henry Foker, Esq. I found her warbling ditties to him as he lay at her feet; presents had been accepted, vows exchanged, these ten days. Harry was old Mrs. Planter's rheumatism, which kept dearest Laura out of the house. He is the most constant and generous of men. He has promised the living of Logwood to Lady Ann's husband, and given her a splendid present on her marriage; and he rushed to fling himself at Blanche's feet the instant he found he was free."

"And so, as you can't get Blanche, you put up with Laura: is that it, sir?" asked the old lady.

"He acted nobly," Laura said.

"I acted as she bade me," said Pen. "Never mind how, Lady Rockminster; but to the best of my knowledge and power. And if you mean that I am not worthy of Laura, I know it, and pray Heaven to better me; and if the love and company of the best and purest creature in the world can do so, at least I shall have these to help me."

"H'm, h'm," replied the old lady to this, looking with rather an appeased air at the young people. "It is all very well; but I should have preferred Bluebeard."

And now Pen, to divert the conversation from a theme which was growing painful to some parties present, bethought him of his interview with Huxter in the morning, and of Fanny Bolton's affairs, which he had forgotten under the immediate pressure and excitement of his own. And he told the ladies how Huxter had elevated Fanny to the rank of wife, and what terrors he was in respecting the arrival of his father. He described the scene with considerable humour, taking care to dwell especially upon that part of it which concerned Fanny's coquetry and irrepressible desire of captivating mankind; his meaning being, "You see, Laura, I was not so guilty in that little affair; it was the girl who made love to me, and I who resisted. As I am no longer present, the little Siren practises her arts and fascinations upon others. Let that transaction be forgotten in your mind, if you please; or visit me with a very gentle punishment for my error."

Laura understood his meaning under the eagerness of his explanations. "If you did any wrong, you repented, dear Pen," she said, "and you know," she added, with meaning eyes and blushes, "that *I* have no right to reproach you."

"H'm!" grumbled the old lady; "I should have preferred Bluebeard."

"The past is broken away. The morrow is before us. I will do my best to make your morrow happy, dear Laura," Pen said. His heart was humbled by the prospect of his happiness: it stood awe-stricken in the contemplation of her sweet goodness and purity. He liked his wife better that she had owned to that passing feeling for Warrington, and laid bare her generous heart to him. And she—very likely she was thinking, "How

strange it is that I ever should have cared for another; I am vexed almost to think I care for him so little, am so little sorry that he is gone away. Oh, in these past two months how I have learned to love Arthur! I care about nothing but Arthur; my waking and sleeping thoughts are about him; he is never absent from me. And to think that he is to be mine, mine! and that I am to marry him, and not to be his servant as I expected to be only this morning; for I would have gone down on my knees to Blanche to beg her to let me live with him. And now—Oh, it is too much. Oh, mother! mother, that you were here!" Indeed, she felt as if Helen were there—by her actually, though invisibly. A halo of happiness beamed from her. She moved with a different step, and bloomed with a new beauty. Arthur saw the change; and the old Lady Rockminster remarked it with her shrewd eyes.

"What a sly demure little wretch you have been," she whispered to Laura—while Pen, in great spirits, was laughing, and telling his story about Huxter—"and how you have kept your secret!"

"How are we to help the young couple?" said Laura. Of course Miss Laura felt an interest in all young couples, as generous lovers always love other lovers.

"We must go and see them," said Pen.

"Of course we must go and see them," said Laura. "I intend to be very fond of Fanny. Let us go this instant. Lady Rockminster, may I have the carriage?"

"Go now!—why, you stupid creature, it is eleven o'clock at night. Mr. and Mrs. Huxter have got their night-caps on, I daresay. And it is time for you to go now. Good-night, Mr. Pendennis."

Arthur and Laura begged for ten minutes more.

"We will go to-morrow morning, then. I will come and fetch you with Martha."

"An earl's coronet," said Pen, who, no doubt, was pleased himself, "will have a great effect in Lamb Court and Smithfield. Stay—Lady Rockminster, will you join us in a little conspiracy?"

"How do you mean conspiracy, young man?"

"Will you please to be a little ill to-morrow; and when old Mr. Huxter arrives, will you let me call him in? If he is put into a good humour at the notion of attending a baronet in the country, what influence won't a countess have on him? When he is softened—when he is quite ripe, we will break the secret upon him; bring in the young people, extort the paternal benediction, and finish the comedy."

"A parcel of stuff," said the old lady. "Take your hat, sir. Come away, miss. There—my head is turned another way. Good-night, young people." And who knows but the old lady thought of her own early days as she went away on Laura's arm, nodding her head and humming to herself?

With the early morning came Laura and Martha, according to appointment; and the desired sensation was, let us hope, effected in Lamb Court, whence the three proceeded to wait upon Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Huxter, at their residence in Charterhouse Lane.

The two ladies looked at each other with great interest, and not a little emotion on Fanny's part. She had not seen her "guardian," as she was pleased to call Pen in consequence of his bequest, since the event had occurred which had united her to Mr. Huxter.

"Samuel told me how kind you had been," she said. "You were always very kind, Mr. Pendennis. And—

and I hope your friend is better, who was took ill in Shepherd's Inn, ma'am."

"My name is Laura," said the other, with a blush. "I am—that is, I was—that is, I am Arthur's sister: and we shall always love you for being so good to him when he was ill. And when we live in the country, I hope we shall see each other. And I shall be always happy to hear of your happiness, Fanny."

"We are going to do what you and Huxter have done, Fanny.—Where is Huxter? What nice, snug lodgings you've got! What a pretty cat!"

While Fanny is answering these questions in reply to Pen, Laura says to herself—"Well, now really! is *this* the creature about whom we were all so frightened? What *could* he see in her? She's a homely little thing, but such manners! Well, she was very kind to him,—bless her for that."

Mr. Samuel had gone out to meet his Pa. Mrs. Huxter said that the old gentleman was to arrive that day at the Somerset Coffee-House in the Strand; and Fanny confessed that she was in a sad tremor about the meeting. "If his parents cast him off, what are we to do?" she said. "I shall never pardon myself for bringing ruing on my 'usband's 'ead. You must intercede for us, Mr. Arthur. If mortal man can, you can bend and influence Mr. 'Uxter senior." Fanny still regarded Pen in the light of a superior being, that was evident. No doubt Arthur thought of the past, as he marked the solemn little tragedy-airs and looks, the little ways, the little trepidations, vanities, of the little bride. As soon as the interview was over entered Messrs. Linton and Blades, who came, of course, to visit Huxter, and brought with them a fine fragrance of tobacco. They had watched

the carriage at the baker's door, and remarked the coronet with awe. They asked of Fanny who was that uncommonly heavy swell who had just driven off? and pronounced the countess to be the right sort. And when they heard that it was Mr. Pendennis and his sister, they remarked that Pen's father was only a sawbones; and that he gave himself confounded airs; they had been in Huxter's company on the night of his little altercation with Pen in the Back Kitchen.

Returning homewards through Fleet Street, and as Laura was just stating to Pen's infinite amusement that Fanny was very well, but that really there was no beauty in her,—there might be, but *she* could not see it,—as they were locked near Temple Bar, they saw young Huxter returning to his bride. "The governor had arrived; was at the Somerset Coffee-House—was in tolerable good-humour—something about the railway: but he had been afraid to speak about—about that business. Would Mr. Pendennis try it on?"

Pen said he would go and call at that moment upon Mr. Huxter, and see what might be done. Huxter junior would lurk outside whilst that awful interview took place. The coronet on the carriage inspired his soul also with wonder; and old Mr. Huxter himself beheld it with delight, as he looked from the coffee-house window on that Strand which it was always a treat to him to survey.

"And I can afford to give myself a lark, sir," said Mr. Huxter, shaking hands with Pen. "Of course you know the news? We have got our bill, sir. We shall have our branch line—our shares are up, sir—and we buy your three fields along the Brawl, and put a pretty penny into *your* pocket, Mr. Pendennis."

"Indeed!—that was good news." Pen remembered that there was a letter from Mr. Tatham, at chambers, these three days; but he had not opened the communication, being interested with other affairs.

"I hope you don't intend to grow rich, and give up practice," said Pen. "We can't lose you at Clavering, Mr. Huxter; though I hear very good accounts of your son. My friend, Dr. Goodenough, speaks most highly of his talents. It is hard that a man of your eminence, though, should be kept in a country town."

"The metropolis would have been my sphere of action, sir," said Mr. Huxter, surveying the Strand. "But a man takes his business where he finds it; and I succeeded to that of my father."

"It was my father's, too," said Pen. "I sometimes wish I had followed it."

"You, sir, have taken a more lofty career," said the old gentleman. "You aspire to the senate: and to literary honours. You wield the poet's pen, sir, and move in the circles of fashion. We keep an eye upon you at Clavering. We read your name in the lists of the select parties of the nobility. Why, it was only the other day that my wife was remarking how odd it was that at a party at the Earl of Kidderminster's your name was *not* mentioned. To what member of the aristocracy may I ask does that equipage belong from which I saw you descend? The Countess Dowager of Rockminster? How is her ladyship?"

"Her ladyship is not very well; and when I heard that you were coming to town, I strongly urged her to see you, Mr. Huxter," Pen said. Old Huxter felt, if he had a hundred votes for Clavering, he would give them all to Pen.

"There is an old friend of yours in the carriage—a Clavering lady too—will you come out and speak to her?" asked Pen. The old surgeon was delighted to speak to a coronetted carriage in the midst of the full Strand: he ran out bowing and smiling. Huxter junior, dodging about the district, beheld the meeting between his father and Laura, saw the latter put out her hand, and presently, after a little colloquy with Pen, beheld his father actually jump into the carriage, and drive away with Miss Bell.

There was no room for Arthur, who came back, laughing, to the young surgeon, and told him whither his parent was bound. During the whole of the journey, that artful Laura coaxed, and wheedled, and cajoled him so adroitly, that the old gentleman would have granted her anything; and Lady Rockminster achieved the victory over him by complimenting him on his skill, and professing her anxiety to consult him. What were her ladyship's symptoms? Should he meet her ladyship's usual medical attendant? Mr. Jones was called out of town? He should be delighted to devote his very best energies and experience to her ladyship's service.

He was so charmed with his patient, that he wrote home about her to his wife and family; he talked of nothing but Lady Rockminster to Samuel, when that youth came to partake of beef-steak and oyster-sauce, and accompany his parent to the play. There was a simple grandeur, a polite urbanity, a high-bred grace about her ladyship, which he had never witnessed in any woman. Her symptoms did not seem alarming: he had prescribed —Spir: Ammon: Aromat: with a little Spir: Menth: Pip: and orange-flower, which would be all that was necessary.

"Miss Bell seemed to be on the most confidential and affectionate footing with her ladyship. She was about to form a matrimonial connexion. All young people ought to marry. Such were her ladyship's words; and the Countess condescended to ask respecting my own family, and I mentioned you by name to her ladyship, Sam, my boy. I shall look in to-morrow, when, if the remedies which I have prescribed for her ladyship have had the effect which I anticipate, I shall probably follow them up by a little Spir: Lavend: Comp:—and so set my noble patient up. What is the theatre which is most frequented by the—by the higher classes in town, hey, Sam? and to what amusement will you take an old country doctor to-night, hey, sir?"

On the next day, when Mr. Huxter called in Jermyn Street at twelve o'clock, Lady Rockminster had not yet left her room, but Miss Bell and Mr. Pendennis were in waiting to receive him. Lady Rockminster had had a most comfortable night, and was getting on as well as possible. How had Mr. Huxter amused himself? at the theatre? with his son? What a capital piece it was, and how charmingly Mrs. O'Leary looked and sang it! and what a good fellow young Huxter was! liked by everybody, an honour to his profession. He has not his father's manners, I grant you, or that old-world tone which is passing away from us, but a more excellent, sterling fellow never lived. "He ought to practise in the country whatever you do, sir," said Arthur—"he ought to marry—other people are going to do so—and settle."

"The very words that her ladyship used yesterday, Mr. Pendennis. He ought to marry. Sam should marry, sir."

"The town is full of temptations, sir," continued Pen.

The old gentleman thought of that houri, Mrs. O'Leary.

"There is no better safeguard for a young man than an early marriage with an honest affectionate creature."

"No better, sir, no better."

"And love is better than money, isn't it?"

"Indeed it is," said Miss Bell.

"I agree with so fair an authority," said the old gentleman, with a bow.

"And—and suppose, sir," Pen said, "that I had a piece of news to communicate to you."

"God bless my soul, Mr. Pendennis! what do you mean?" asked the old gentleman.

"Suppose I had to tell you that a young man, carried away by an irresistible passion for an admirable and most virtuous young creature—whom everybody falls in love with—had consulted the dictates of reason and his heart, and had married. Suppose I were to tell you that that man is my friend; that our excellent, our truly noble friend the Countess Dowager of Rockminster is truly interested about him (and you may fancy what a young man can do in life when THAT family is interested for him); suppose I were to tell you that you know him—that he is here—that he is—"

"Sam married! God bless my soul, sir, you don't mean that!"

"And to such a nice creature, dear Mr. Huxter."

"Her ladyship is charmed with her," said Pen, telling almost the first fib which he has told in the course of this story.

"Married! the rascal, is he?" thought the old gentleman.

"They will do it, sir," said Pen; and went and opened the door.

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Huxter issued thence, and both came and knelt down before the old gentleman. The kneeling little Fanny found favour in his sight. There *must* have been something attractive about her, in spite of Laura's opinion.

"Will never do so any more, sir," said Sam.

"Get up, sir," said Mr. Huxter. And they got up, and Fanny came a little nearer and a little nearer still, and looked so pretty and pitiful, that somehow Mr. Huxter found himself kissing the little crying-laughing thing, and feeling as if he liked it.

"What's your name, my dear?" he said, after a minute of this sport.

"Fanny, papa," said Mrs. Samuel.

Mr. Huxter asks pardon

CHAPTER LXXV

EXEUNT OMNES

OUR characters are all a month older than they were when the last-described adventures and conversations occurred, and a great number of the personages of our story have chanced to re-assemble at the little country town where we were first introduced to them. Frederic Lightfoot, formerly *maître-d'hôtel* in the service of Sir Francis Clavering, of Clavering Park, Bart., has begged leave to inform the nobility and gentry of ——shire that he has taken that well-known and comfortable hotel, the " Clavering Arms," in Clavering, where he hopes for the continued patronage of the gentlemen and families of the county. " This ancient and well-established house," Mr. Lightfoot's manifesto states, " has been repaired and decorated in a style of the greatest comfort. Gentlemen hunting with the Dumplingbeare hounds will find excellent stabling and loose boxes for horses at the ' Clavering Arms.' A commodious billiard-room has been attached to the hotel, and the cellars have been furnished with the choicest wines and spirits, selected, without regard to expense, by F. L. Commercial gentlemen

will find the 'Clavering Arms' a most comfortable place of resort: and the scale of charges has been regulated for all, so as to meet the economical spirit of the present times."

Indeed, there is a considerable air of liveliness about the old inn. The Clavering arms have been splendidly repainted over the gateway. The coffee-room windows are bright and fresh, and decorated with Christmas holly; the magistrates have met in petty sessions in the card-room of the old Assembly. The farmers' ordinary is held as of old, and frequented by increased numbers, who are pleased with Mrs. Lightfoot's cuisine. Her Indian curries and mulligatawny soup are especially popular: Major Stokes, the respected tenant of Fairoaks Cottage, Captain Glanders, H.P., and other resident gentry, have pronounced in their favour, and have partaken of them more than once, both in private and at the dinner of the Clavering Institute, attendant on the incorporation of the reading-room, and when the chief inhabitants of that flourishing little town met together and did justice to the hostess's excellent cheer. The chair was taken by Sir Francis Clavering, Bart., supported by the esteemed rector, Dr. Portman; the vice-chair being ably filled by — Barker, Esq. (supported by the Rev. J. Simcoe and the Rev. S. Jowls), the enterprising head of the ribbon factory in Clavering, and chief director of the Clavering and Chatteris Branch of the Great Western Railway, which will be opened in another year, and upon the works of which the engineers and workmen are now busily engaged.

"An interesting event, which is likely to take place in the life of our talented townsman, Arthur Pendennis, Esq., has, we understand, caused him to relinquish the

intentions which he had of offering himself as a candidate for our borough: and rumour whispers" (says the "Chatteris Champion, Clavering Agriculturist, and Baymouth Fisherman,"—that independent county paper, so distinguished for its unswerving principles and loyalty to the British oak, and so eligible a medium for advertisements)—"rumour states," says the C. C., C. A. and B. F., "that should Sir Francis Clavering's failing health oblige him to relinquish his seat in Parliament, he will vacate it in favour of a young gentleman of colossal fortune and related to the highest aristocracy of the empire, who is about to contract a matrimonial alliance with an accomplished and lovely lady, connected by the nearest ties with the respected family at Clavering Park. Lady Clavering and Miss Amory have arrived at the Park for the Christmas holidays; and we understand that a large number of the aristocracy are expected, and that festivities of a peculiarly interesting nature will take place there at the commencement of the new year."

The ingenious reader will be enabled, by the help of the above announcement, to understand what has taken place during the little break which has occurred in our narrative. Although Lady Rockminster grumbled a little at Laura's preference for Pendennis over Bluebeard, those who are aware of the latter's secret will understand that the young girl could make no other choice, and the kind old lady who had constituted herself Miss Bell's guardian was not ill pleased that she was to fulfil the great purpose in life of young ladies and marry. She informed her maid of the interesting event that very night, and of course Mrs. Beck, who was perfectly aware of every single circumstance, and kept by Martha, of Fairoaks, in the fullest knowledge of what was passing,

was immensely surprised and delighted. "Mr. Pendennis's income is so much; the railroad will give him so much more, he states; Miss Bell has so much, and may probably have a little more one day. For persons in their degree, they will be able to manage very well. And I shall speak to my nephew Pynsent, who I suspect was once rather attached to her,—but of course that was out of the question ("Oh! of course, my lady; I should think so indeed!")—not that you know anything whatever about it, or have any business to think at all on the subject,—I shall speak to George Pynsent, who is now chief secretary of the Tape and Sealing Wax Office, and have Mr. Pendennis made something. And, Beck, in the morning you will carry down my compliments to Major Pendennis, and say that I shall pay him a visit at one o'clock. Yes," muttered the old lady, "the Major must be reconciled, and he must leave his fortune to Laura's children."

Accordingly, at one o'clock, the Dowager Lady Rockminster appeared at Major Pendennis's, who was delighted, as may be imagined, to receive so noble a visitor. The Major had been prepared, if not for the news which her ladyship was about to give him, at least with the intelligence that Pen's marriage with Miss Amory was broken off. The young gentleman bethinking him of his uncle, for the first time that day it must be owned, and meeting his new servant in the hall of the hotel, asked after the Major's health from Mr. Frosch; and then went into the coffee-room of the hotel, where he wrote a half-dozen lines to acquaint his guardian with what had occurred. "Dear uncle," he said, "if there has been any question between us, it is over now. I went to Tunbridge Wells yesterday, and found

that somebody else had carried off the prize about which we were hesitating. Miss A., without any compunction for me, has bestowed herself upon Harry Foker, with his fifteen thousand a year. I came in suddenly upon their loves, and found and left him in possession.

"And you'll be glad to hear, Tatham writes me, that he has sold three of my fields at Fairoaks to the Railroad Company, at a great figure. I will tell you this, and more when we meet; and am always your affectionate—A. P."

"I think I am aware of what you were about to tell me," the Major said, with a most courtly smile and bow to Pen's ambassadress. "It was a very great kindness of your ladyship to think of bringing me the news. How well you look! How very good you are! How very kind you have always been to that young man!"

"It was for the sake of his uncle," said Lady Rockminster, most politely.

"He has informed me of the state of affairs, and written me a nice note,—yes, a nice note," continued the old gentleman; "and I find he has had an increase to his fortune,—yes; and, all things considered, I don't much regret that this affair with Miss Amory is *manquée,* though I wished for it once,—in fact, all things considered, I am very glad of it."

"We must console him, Major Pendennis," continued the lady; "we must get him a wife." The truth then came across the Major's mind, and he saw for what purpose Lady Rockminster had chosen to assume the office of ambassadress.

It is not necessary to enter into the conversation which ensued, or to tell at any length how her ladyship con-

cluded a negotiation, which, in truth, was tolerably easy. There could be no reason why Pen should not marry according to his own and his mother's wish: and as for Lady Rockminster, she supported the marriage by intimations which had very great weight with the Major, but of which we shall say nothing, as her ladyship (now, of course, much advanced in years) is still alive, and the family might be angry; and, in fine, the old gentleman was quite overcome by the determined graciousness of the lady, and her fondness for Laura. Nothing, indeed, could be more bland and kind than Lady Rockminster's whole demeanour, except for one moment when the Major talked about his boy throwing himself away, at which her ladyship broke out into a little speech, in which she made the Major understand, what poor Pen and his friends acknowledge very humbly, that Laura was a thousand times too good for him. Laura was fit to be the wife of a king,—Laura was a paragon of virtue and excellence. And it must be said, that when Major Pendennis found that a lady of the rank of the Countess of Rockminster seriously admired Miss Bell, he instantly began to admire her himself.

So that when Herr Frosch was requested to walk up stairs to Lady Rockminster's apartments, and inform Miss Bell and Mr. Arthur Pendennis that the Major would receive them, and Laura appeared blushing and happy as she hung on Pen's arm, the Major gave a shaky hand to one and the other, with unaffected emotion and cordiality, and then went through another salutation to Laura, which caused her to blush still more. Happy blushes! bright eyes beaming with the light of love! The story-teller turns from this group to his young audience, and hopes that one day their eyes may all shine so.

Pen having retreated in the most friendly manner, and the lovely Blanche having bestowed her young affections upon a blushing bridegroom, with fifteen thousand a year, there was such an outbreak of happiness in Lady Clavering's heart and family as the good Begum had not known for many a year, and she and Blanche were on the most delightful terms of cordiality and affection. The ardent Foker pressed onwards the happy day, and was as anxious as might be expected to abridge the period of mourning which should put him in possession of so many charms and amiable qualities, of which he had been only, as it were, the heir-apparent, not the actual owner, until then. The gentle Blanche, everything that her affianced lord could desire, was not averse to gratify the wishes of her fond Henry. Lady Clavering came up from Tunbridge. Milliners and jewellers were set to work and engaged to prepare the delightful paraphernalia of Hymen. Lady Clavering was in such a good humour, that Sir Francis even benefited by it, and such a reconciliation was effected between this pair, that Sir Francis came to London, sate at the head of his own table once more, and appeared tolerably flush of money at his billiard-rooms and gambling-houses again. One day, when Major Pendennis and Arthur went to dine in Grosvenor Place, they found an old acquaintance established in the quality of major-domo, and the gentleman in black, who, with perfect politeness and gravity, offered them their choice of sweet or dry champagne, was no other than Mr. James Morgan. The Chevalier Strong was one of the party; he was in high spirits and condition, and entertained the company with accounts of his amusements abroad.

"It was my Lady who invited me," said Strong to

Arthur, under his voice—"that fellow Morgan looked as black as thunder when I came in. He is about no good here. I will go away first, and wait for you and Major Pendennis at Hyde Park Gate."

Mr. Morgan helped Major Pendennis to his great-coat when he was quitting the house; and muttered something about having accepted a temporary engagement with the Clavering family.

"I have got a paper of yours, Mr. Morgan," said the old gentleman.

"Which you can show, if you please, to Sir Francis, sir, and perfectly welcome," said Mr. Morgan, with downcast eyes. "I'm very much obliged to you, Major Pendennis, and if I can pay you for all your kindness I will."

Arthur overheard the sentence, and saw the look of hatred which accompanied it, suddenly cried out that he had forgotten his handkerchief, and ran up stairs to the drawing-room again. Foker was still there: still lingering about his siren. Pen gave the siren a look full of meaning, and we suppose that the siren understood meaning looks, for when, after finding the veracious handkerchief of which he came in quest, he once more went out, the siren, with a laughing voice, said, "Oh, Arthur—Mr. Pendennis—I want you to tell dear Laura something!" and she came out to the door.

"What is it?" she asked, shutting the door.

"Have you told Harry? Do you know that villain Morgan knows all?"

"I know it," she said.

"Have you told Harry?"

"No, no," she said. "You won't betray me?"

"Morgan will," said Pen.

" No, he won't," said Blanche. " I have promised him —*n'importe*. Wait until after our marriage—Oh, until after our marriage—Oh, how wretched I am!" said the girl, who had been all smiles, and grace, and gaiety during the evening.

Arthur said, " I beg and implore you to tell Harry. Tell him now. It is no fault of yours. He will pardon you anything. Tell him to-night."

" And give her this—*Il est là*—with my love, please; and I beg your pardon for calling you back; and if she will be at Madame Crinoline's at half-past three, and if Lady Rockminster can spare her, I should *so* like to drive with her in the Park;" and she went in, singing and kissing her little hand, as Morgan the velvet-footed came up the carpeted stair.

Pen heard Blanche's piano breaking out into brilliant music as he went down to join his uncle; and they walked away together. Arthur briefly told him what he had done. " What was to be done?" he asked.

" What is to be done, begad?" said the old gentleman. " What is to be done but to leave it alone? Begad, let us be thankful," said the old fellow, with a shudder, " that we are out of the business, and leave it to those it concerns."

" I hope to Heaven she'll tell him," said Pen.

" Begad, she'll take her own course," said the old man. " Miss Amory is a dev'lish wideawake girl, sir, and must play her own cards; and I'm doosid glad you are out of it—doosid glad, begad. Who's this smoking? Oh, it's Mr. Strong again. He wants to put in *his* oar, I suppose. I tell you, don't meddle in the business, Arthur."

Strong began once or twice, as if to converse upon the subject, but the Major would not hear a word. He re-

marked on the moonlight on Apsley House, the weather, the cab-stands—anything but that subject. He bowed stiffly to Strong, and clung to his nephew's arm, as he turned down St. James's Street, and again cautioned Pen to leave the affair alone. "It had like to have cost you so much, sir, that you may take my advice," he said.

When Arthur came out of the hotel, Strong's cloak and cigar were visible a few doors off. The jolly Chevalier laughed as they met. "I'm an old soldier, too," he said. "I wanted to talk to you, Pendennis. I have heard of all that has happened, and all the chops and changes that have taken place during my absence. I congratulate you on your marriage, and I congratulate you on your escape, too,—you understand me. It was not my business to speak, but I know this, that a certain party is as arrant a little—well—well, never mind what. You acted like a man and a trump, and are well out of it."

"I have no reason to complain," said Pen. "I went back to beg and entreat poor Blanche to tell Foker all: I hope, for her sake, she will; but I fear not. There is but one policy, Strong, there is but one."

"And lucky he that can stick to it," said the Chevalier. "That rascal Morgan means mischief. He has been lurking about our chambers for the last two months: he has found out that poor mad devil Amory's secret. He has been trying to discover where he was: he has been pumping Mr. Bolton, and making old Costigan drunk several times. He bribed the Inn porter to tell him when we came back: and he has got into Clavering's service on the strength of his information. He will get very good pay for it, mark my words, the villain."

"Where is Amory?" asked Pen.

"At Boulogne, I believe. I left him there, and warned him not to come back. I have broken with him, after a desperate quarrel, such as one might have expected with such a madman. And I'm glad to think that he is in my debt now, and that I have been the means of keeping him out of more harms than one."

"He has lost all his winnings, I suppose?" said Pen.

"No: he is rather better than when he went away, or was a fortnight ago. He had extraordinary luck at Baden: broke the bank several nights, and was the fable of the place. He *liéd* himself there with a fellow, by the name of Bloundell, who gathered about him a society of all sorts of sharpers, male and female, Russians, Germans, French, English. Amory got so insolent, that I was obliged to thrash him one day within an inch of his life. I couldn't help myself; the fellow has plenty of pluck, and I had nothing for it but to hit out."

"And did he call you out?" said Pen.

"You think if I had shot him I should have done nobody any harm? No, sir; I waited for his challenge, but it never came: and the next time I met him he begged my pardon, and said, 'Strong, I beg your pardon; you whopped me and you served me right.' I shook hands: but I couldn't live with him after that. I paid him what I owed him the night before," said Strong, with a blush. "I pawned everything to pay him, and then I went with my last ten florins, and had a shy at the *roulette*. If I had lost, I should have let him shoot me in the morning. I was weary of my life. By Jove, sir, isn't it a shame that a man like me, who may have had a few bills out, but who never deserted a friend, or did any unfair action, shouldn't be able to turn his hand to anything to get bread? I made a good night, sir, at *roulette*, and

I've done with *that*. I'm going into the wine business. My wife's relations live at Cadiz. I intend to bring over Spanish wine and hams; there's a fortune to be made by it, sir,—a fortune—here's my card. If you want any sherry or hams, recollect Ned Strong is your man." And the Chevalier pulled out a handsome card, stating that Strong and Company, Shepherd's Inn, were sole agents of the celebrated Diamond Manzanilla of the Duke of Garbanzos, Grandee of Spain of the First Class; and of the famous Toboso hams, fed on acorns only in the country of Don Quixote. "Come and taste 'em, sir,—come and try 'em at my chambers. You see I've an eye to business, and by Jove this time I'll succeed."

Pen laughed as he took the card. "I don't know whether I shall be allowed to go to bachelor's parties," he said. "You know I'm going to—"

"But you *must* have sherry, sir. You must have sherry."

"I will have it from you, depend on it," said the other. "And I think you are very well out of your other partnership. That worthy Altamont and his daughter correspond, I hear," Pen added after a pause.

"Yes; she wrote him the longest rigmarole letters, that I used to read: the sly little devil; and he answered under cover to Mrs. Bonner. He was for carrying her off the first day or two, and nothing would content him but having back his child. But she didn't want to come, as you may fancy; and he was not very eager about it." Here the Chevalier burst out in a laugh. "Why, sir, do you know what was the cause of our quarrel and boxing-match? There was a certain widow at Baden, a Madame la Baronne de la Cruche-cassée, who was not

much better than himself, and whom the scoundrel wanted to marry; and would, but that I told her he was married already. I don't think that she was much better than he was. I saw her on the pier at Boulogne the day I came to England."

And now we have brought up our narrative to the point, whither the announcement in the "Chatteris Champion" had already conducted us.

It wanted but very, very few days before that blissful one when Foker should call Blanche his own; the Clavering folks had all pressed to see the most splendid new carriage in the whole world, which was standing in the coach-house at the "Clavering Arms;" and shown, in grateful return for drink, commonly, by Mr. Foker's head coachman. Madame Fribsby was occupied in making some lovely dresses for the tenants' daughters, who were to figure as a sort of bridesmaids' chorus at the breakfast and marriage ceremony. And immense festivities were to take place at the Park upon this delightful occasion.

"Yes, Mr. Huxter, yes; a happy tenantry, its country's pride, will assemble in the baronial hall, where the beards will wag all. The ox shall be slain, and the cup they'll drain; and the bells shall peal quite genteel; and my father-in-law, with the tear of sensibility bedewing his eye, shall bless us at his baronial porch. That shall be the order of proceedings I think, Mr. Huxter; and I hope we shall see you and *your* lovely bride by her husband's side, and what will you please to drink, sir? Mrs. Lightfoot, madam, you will give to my excellent friend and body surgeon, Mr. Huxter, Mr. Samuel Huxter, M.R.C.S., every refreshment that your hostel affords, and place the festive amount to my account; and, Mr.

Lightfoot, sir, what will *you* take? though you've had enough already, I think; yes, ha."

So spoke Harry Foker, in the bar of the "Clavering Arms." He had apartments at that hotel, and had gathered a circle of friends round him there. He treated all to drink who came. He was hail-fellow with every man. He was so happy! He danced round Madame Fribsby, Mrs. Lightfoot's great ally, as she sate pensive in the bar. He consoled Mrs. Lightfoot, who had already begun to have causes of matrimonial disquiet; for the truth must be told, that young Lightfoot, having now the full command of the cellar, had none over his own unbridled desires, and was tippling and tipsy from morning till night. And a piteous sight it was for his fond wife to behold the big youth reeling about the yard and coffee-room, or drinking with the farmers and tradesmen his own neat wines and carefully-selected stock of spirits.

When he could find time, Mr. Morgan the butler came from the Park, and took a glass at the expense of the landlord of the "Clavering Arms." He watched poor Lightfoot's tipsy vagaries with savage sneers. Mrs. Lightfoot felt always doubly uncomfortable when her unhappy spouse was under his comrade's eye. But a few months married, and to think he had got to this! Madame Fribsby could feel for her. Madame Fribsby could tell her stories of men every bit as bad. She had had her own woes too, and her sad experience of men. So it is, that nobody seems happy altogether; and that there's bitters, as Mr. Foker remarked, in the cup of every man's life. And yet there did not seem to be any in his, the honest young fellow! It was brimming over with happiness and good-humour.

Mr. Morgan was constant in his attentions to Foker.

"And yet I don't like him somehow," said the candid young man to Mrs. Lightfoot. "He always seems as if he was measuring me for my coffin somehow. Pa-in-law's afraid of him; pa-in-law's—a-hem! never mind, but ma-in-law's a trump, Mrs. Lightfoot."

"Indeed my Lady was;" and Mrs. Lightfoot owned, with a sigh, that perhaps it had been better for her had she never left her mistress.

"No, I do not like thee, Dr. Fell; the reason why I cannot tell," continued Mr. Foker; "and he wants to be taken as my head man. Blanche wants me to take him. Why does Miss Amory like him so?"

"Did Miss Blanche like him so?" The notion seemed to disturb Mrs. Lightfoot very much; and there came to this worthy landlady another cause for disturbance. A letter, bearing the Boulogne postmark, was brought to her one morning, and she and her husband were quarrelling over it as Foker passed down the stairs by the bar, on his way to the Park. His custom was to breakfast there, and bask awhile in the presence of Armida; then, as the company of Clavering tired him exceedingly, and he did not care for sporting, he would return for an hour or two to billiards and the society of the "Clavering Arms;" then it would be time to ride with Miss Amory, and after dining with her, he left her and returned modestly to his inn.

Lightfoot and his wife were quarrelling over the letter. What was that letter from abroad? Why was she always having letters from abroad? Who wrote 'em?—he would know. He didn't believe it was her brother. It was no business of his? It *was* a business of his; and, with a curse, he seized hold of his wife, and dashed at her pocket for the letter.

The poor woman gave a scream; and said, "Well, take it." Just as her husband seized on the letter, and Mr. Foker entered at the door, she gave another scream at seeing him, and once more tried to seize the paper. Lightfoot opened it, shaking her away, and an enclosure dropped down on the breakfast-table.

"Hands off, man alive!" cried little Harry, springing in. "Don't lay hands on a woman, sir. The man that lays his hand upon a woman, save in the way of kindness, is a—hallo! it's a letter for Miss Amory. What's this, Mrs. Lightfoot?"

Mrs. Lightfoot began, in piteous tones of reproach to her husband,—"You unmanly fellow! to treat a woman so who took you off the street. Oh, you coward, to lay your hand upon your wife! Why did I marry you? Why did I leave my Lady for you? Why did I spend eight hundred pound in fitting up this house that you might drink and guzzle?"

"She gets letters, and she won't tell me who writes letters," said Mr. Lightfoot, with a muzzy voice; "it's a family affair, sir. Will you take anything, sir?"

"I will take this letter to Miss Amory, as I am going to the Park," said Foker, turning very pale; and taking it up from the table, which was arranged for the poor landlady's breakfast, he went away.

"He's comin'—dammy, who's a comin'? Who's J. A., Mrs. Lightfoot—curse me, who's J. A.?" cried the husband.

Mrs. Lightfoot cried out, "Be quiet, you tipsy brute, do!"—and running to her bonnet and shawl, threw them on, saw Mr. Foker walking down the street, took the by-lane which skirts it, and ran as quickly as she could to the lodge-gate, Clavering Park. Foker saw a run-

ning figure before him, but it was lost when he got to the lodge-gate. He stopped and asked, "Who was that who had just come in? Mrs. Bonner was it?" He reeled almost in his walk: the trees swam before him. He rested once or twice against the trunks of the naked limes.

Lady Clavering was in the breakfast-room with her son, and her husband yawning over his paper. "Good-morning, Harry," said the Begum. "Here's letters, lots of letters; Lady Rockminster will be here on Tuesday instead of Monday, and Arthur and the Major come to-day; and Laura is to go to Dr. Portman's and come to church from there: and—what's the matter, my dear? What makes you so pale, Harry?"

"Where is Blanche?" asked Harry, in a sickening voice—"not down yet?"

"Blanche is always the last," said the boy, eating muffins; "she's a regular dawdle, she is. When you're not here, she lays in bed till lunch time."

"Be quiet, Frank," said the mother.

Blanche came down presently, looking pale, and with rather an eager look towards Foker; then she advanced and kissed her mother, and had a face beaming with her very best smiles on when she greeted Harry.

"How do you do, sir?" she said, and put out both her hands.

"I'm ill," answered Harry. "I—I've brought a letter for you, Blanche."

"A letter, and from whom is it, pray? *Voyons,*" she said.

"I don't know—I should like to know," said Foker.

"How can I tell until I see it?" asked Blanche.

"Has Mrs. Bonner not told you?" he said, with a

shaking voice;—"there's some secret. *You* give her the letter, Lady Clavering."

Lady Clavering, wondering, took the letter from poor Foker's shaking hand, and looked at the superscription. As she looked at it, she too began to shake in every limb, and with a scared face she dropped the letter, and running up to Frank, clutched the boy to her, and burst out with a sob—"Take that away—it's impossible, it's impossible."

"What is the matter?" cried Blanche, with rather a ghastly smile; "the letter is only from—from a poor pensioner and relative of ours."

"It's not true, it's not true," screamed Lady Clavering. "No, my Frank,—is it, Clavering?"

Blanche had taken up the letter, and was moving with it towards the fire, but Foker ran to her and clutched her arm—"I must see that letter," he said; "give it me. You shan't burn it."

"You—you shall not treat Miss Amory so in my house," cried the Baronet; "give back the letter, by Jove!"

"Read it—and look at her," Blanche cried, pointing to her mother; "it—it was for her I kept the secret! Read it, cruel man!"

And Foker opened and read the letter:—

"I HAVE not wrote, my darling Bessy, this three weeks; but this is to give her a *father's blessing*, and I shall come down pretty soon as quick as my note, and intend to see *the ceremony, and my son-in-law*. I shall put up at Bonner's. I have had a pleasant autumn, and am staying here at an hotel where there *is good company*, and which is kep' *in good style*. I don't know whether I quite approve of your throwing over Mr. P. for Mr. F., and don't think Foker's *such a pretty name*, and from your

account of him he seems a *muff*, and *not a beauty*. But he has got *the rowdy*, which is the thing. So no more, my dear little Betsy, till we meet, from your affectionate father,

"J. Amory Altamont."

"Read it, Lady Clavering; it is too late to keep it from you now," said poor Foker; and the distracted woman, having cast her eyes over it, again broke out into hysterical screams, and convulsively grasped her son.

"They have made an outcast of you, my boy," she said. "They've dishonoured your old mother; but I'm innocent, Frank; before God, I'm innocent. I didn't know this, Mr. Foker; indeed, indeed, I didn't."

"I'm sure you didn't," said Foker, going up and kissing her hand.

"Generous, generous Harry," cried out Blanche, in an ecstasy. But he withdrew his hand, which was upon *her* side, and turned from her with a quivering lip. "That's different," he says.

"It was for her sake—for her sake, Harry." Again Miss Amory is in an attitude.

"There was something to be done for mine," said Foker. "I would have taken you, whatever you were. Everything's talked about in London. I knew that your father had come to—to grief. You don't think it was —it was for your connexion I married you? D— it all! I've loved you with all my heart and soul for two years, and you've been playing with me, and cheating me," broke out the young man, with a cry. "Oh, Blanche, Blanche, it's a hard thing, a hard thing!" and he covered his face with his hands, and sobbed behind them.

Blanche thought, "Why didn't I tell him that night when Arthur warned me?"

"Don't refuse her, Harry," cried out Lady Clavering. "Take her, take everything I have. It's all hers, you know, at my death. This boy's disinherited."—(Master Frank, who had been looking as scared at the strange scene, here burst into a loud cry.)—"Take every shilling. Give me just enough to live, and to go and hide my head with this child, and to fly from both. Oh, they've both been bad, bad men. Perhaps he's here now. Don't let me see him. Clavering, you coward, defend me from him."

Clavering started up at this proposal. "You ain't serious, Jemima? You don't mean that?" he said. "You won't throw me and Frank over? I didn't know it, so help me —. Foker, I'd no more idea of it than the dead —until the fellow came and found me out, the d—d escaped convict scoundrel."

"The what?" said Foker. Blanche gave a scream.

"Yes," screamed out the Baronet in his turn. "Yes, a d—d runaway convict—a fellow that forged his father-in-law's name—a d—d attorney, and killed a fellow in Botany Bay, hang him—and ran into the Bush, curse him; I wish he'd died there. And he came to me, a good six years ago, and robbed me; and I've been ruining myself to keep him, the infernal scoundrel! And Pendennis knows it, and Strong knows it, and that d—d Morgan knows it, and she knows it, ever so long; and I never would tell it, never: and I kept it from my wife."

"And you saw him, and you didn't kill him, Clavering, you coward?" said the wife of Amory. "Come away, Frank; your father's a coward. I am dishonoured, but I'm your old mother, and you'll—you'll love me, won't you?"

Blanche, *éplorée,* went up to her mother; but Lady

Clavering shrank from her with a sort of terror. "Don't touch me," she said; "you've no heart; you never had. I see all now. I see why that coward was going to give up his place in Parliament to Arthur; yes, that coward! and why you threatened that you would make me give you half Frank's fortune. And when Arthur offered to marry you without a shilling, because he wouldn't rob my boy, you left him, and you took poor Harry. Have nothing to do with her, Harry. You're good, you are. Don't marry that—that convict's daughter. Come away, Frank, my darling; come to your poor old mother. We'll hide ourselves; but we're honest, yes, we are honest."

All this while a strange feeling of exultation had taken possession of Blanche's mind. That month with poor Harry had been a weary month to her. All his fortune and splendour scarcely sufficed to make the idea of himself supportable. She was wearied of his simple ways, and sick of coaxing and cajoling him.

"Stay, mamma; stay, madam!" she cried out with a gesture which was always appropriate, though rather theatrical; "I have no heart, have I? I keep the secret of my mother's shame. I give up my rights to my half-brother and my bastard brother—yes, my rights and my fortune. I don't betray my father, and for this I have no heart! I'll have my rights now, and the laws of my country shall give them to me. I appeal to my country's laws—yes, my country's laws! The persecuted one returns this day. I desire to go to my father." And the little lady swept round her hand, and thought that she was a heroine.

"You will, will you?" cried out Clavering, with one of his usual oaths. "I'm a magistrate, and dammy, I'll

commit him. Here's a chaise coming; perhaps it's him. Let him come."

A chaise was indeed coming up the avenue; and the two women shrieked each their loudest, expecting at that moment to see Altamont arrive.

The door opened, and Mr. Morgan announced Major Pendennis and Mr. Pendennis, who entered, and found all parties engaged in this fierce quarrel. A large screen fenced the breakfast-room from the hall; and it is probable that, according to his custom, Mr. Morgan had taken advantage of the screen to make himself acquainted with all that occurred.

It had been arranged on the previous day that the young people should ride; and at the appointed hour in the afternoon, Mr. Foker's horses arrived from the "Clavering Arms." But Miss Blanche did not accompany him on this occasion. Pen came out and shook hands with him on the door-steps; and Harry Foker rode away, followed by his groom in mourning. The whole transactions which have occupied the most active part of our history were debated by the parties concerned during those two or three hours. Many counsels had been given, stories told, and compromises suggested; and at the end, Harry Foker rode away, with a sad "God bless you!" from Pen. There was a dreary dinner at Clavering Park, at which the lately installed butler did not attend; and the ladies were both absent. After dinner, Pen said, "I will walk down to Clavering and see if he is come." And he walked through the dark avenue, across the bridge and road by his own cottage,—the once quiet and familiar fields of which were flaming with the kilns and forges of the artificers employed on the new railroad works; and so he entered the town, and made for the "Clavering Arms."

It was past midnight when he returned to Clavering Park. He was exceedingly pale and agitated. "Is Lady Clavering up yet?" he asked. Yes, she was in her own sitting-room. He went up to her, and there found the poor lady in a piteous state of tears and agitation.

"It is I,—Arthur," he said, looking in; and entering, he took her hand very affectionately and kissed it. "You were always the kindest of friends to me, dear Lady Clavering," he said. "I love you very much. I have got some news for you."

"Don't call me by that name," she said, pressing his hand. "You were always a good boy, Arthur; and it's kind of you to come now,—very kind. You sometimes look very like your ma, my dear."

"Dear good *Lady Clavering*," Arthur repeated, with particular emphasis, "something very strange has happened."

"Has anything happened to him?" gasped Lady Clavering. "Oh, it's horrid to think I should be glad of it—horrid!"

"He is well. He has been and is gone, my dear lady. Don't alarm yourself,—he is gone, and you are Lady Clavering still."

"Is it true, what he sometimes said to me," she screamed out,—"that he—?"

"He was married before he married you," said Pen. "He has confessed it to-night. He will never come back." There came another shriek from Lady Clavering, as she flung her arms round Pen, and kissed him, and burst into tears on his shoulder.

What Pen had to tell, through a multiplicity of sobs and interruptions, must be compressed briefly, for behold our prescribed limit is reached, and our tale is coming

to its end. With the Branch Coach from the railroad, which had succeeded the old Alacrity and Perseverance, Amory arrived, and was set down at the "Clavering Arms." He ordered his dinner at the place under his assumed name of Altamont; and, being of a jovial turn, he welcomed the landlord, who was nothing loth, to a share of his wine. Having extracted from Mr. Lightfoot all the news regarding the family at the Park, and found, from examining his host, that Mrs. Lightfoot, as she said, had kept his counsel, he called for more wine of Mr. Lightfoot, and at the end of this symposium, both, being greatly excited, went into Mrs. Lightfoot's bar.

She was there taking tea with her friend, Madame Fribsby; and Lightfoot was by this time in such a happy state as not to be surprised at anything which might occur, so that, when Altamont shook hands with Mrs. Lightfoot as an old acquaintance, the recognition did not appear to him to be in the least strange, but only a reasonable cause for further drinking. The gentlemen partook then of brandy-and-water, which they offered to the ladies, not heeding the terrified looks of one or the other.

Whilst they were so engaged, at about six o'clock in the evening, Mr. Morgan, Sir Francis Clavering's new man, came in, and was requested to drink. He selected his favourite beverage, and the parties engaged in general conversation.

After a while Mr. Lightfoot began to doze. Mr. Morgan had repeatedly given hints to Mrs. Fribsby to quit the premises; but that lady, strangely fascinated, and terrified it would seem, or persuaded by Mrs. Lightfoot not to go, kept her place. Her persistence occasioned

much annoyance to Mr. Morgan, who vented his displeasure in such language as gave pain to Mrs. Lightfoot, and caused Mr. Altamont to say, that he was a rum customer, and not polite to the sex.

The altercation between the two gentlemen became very painful to the women, especially to Mrs. Lightfoot, who did everything to soothe Mr. Morgan; and, under pretence of giving a pipe-light to the stranger, she handed him a paper, on which she had privily written the words, "He knows you. Go." There may have been something suspicious in her manner of handing, or in her guest's of reading, the paper: for when he got up a short time afterwards, and said he would go to bed, Morgan rose too, with a laugh, and said it was too early to go to bed.

The stranger then said he would go to his bedroom. Morgan said he would show him the way.

At this the guest said, "Come up. I've got a brace of pistols up there to blow out the brains of any traitor or skulking spy," and glared so fiercely upon Morgan, that the latter, seizing hold of Lightfoot by the collar, and waking him, said, "John Amory, I arrest you in the Queen's name. Stand by me, Lightfoot. This capture is worth a thousand pounds."

He put forward his hand as if to seize his prisoner, but the other, doubling his fist, gave Morgan with his left hand so fierce a blow on the chest, that it knocked him back behind Mr. Lightfoot. That gentleman, who was athletic and courageous, said he would knock his guest's head off, and prepared to do so, as the stranger, tearing off his coat, and cursing both of his opponents, roared to them to come on.

But with a piercing scream Mrs. Lightfoot flung her-

self before her husband, whilst with another and louder shriek Madame Fribsby ran to the stranger, and calling out "Armstrong, Johnny Armstrong!" seized hold of his naked arm, on which a blue tattooing of a heart and M. F. were visible.

The ejaculation of Madame Fribsby seemed to astound and sober the stranger. He looked down upon her, and cried out, "It's Polly, by Jove."

Mrs. Fribsby continued to exclaim: "This is not Amory. This is Johnny Armstrong, my wicked—wicked husband, married to me in St. Martin's Church, mate on board an Indiaman, and he left me two months after, the wicked wretch. This is John Armstrong—here's the mark on his arm which he made for me."

The stranger said, "I am John Armstrong, sure enough, Polly. I'm John Armstrong, Amory, Altamont,—and let 'em all come on, and try what they can do against a British sailor. Hurray, who's for it?"

Morgan still called out, "Arrest him!" But Mrs. Lightfoot said, "Arrest him! arrest you, you mean spy! What! stop the marriage and ruin my Lady, and take away the 'Clavering Arms' from us?"

"*Did* he say he'd take away the 'Clavering Arms' from us?" asked Mr. Lightfoot, turning round. "Hang him, I'll throttle him!"

"Keep him, darling, till the coach passes to the up train. It'll be here now directly."

"D— him, I'll choke him if he stirs," said Lightfoot. And so they kept Morgan until the coach came, and Mr. Amory or Armstrong went away back to London.

Morgan had followed him: but of this event Arthur Pendennis did not inform Lady Clavering, and left her

A Discovery

invoking blessings upon him at her son's door, going to kiss him as he was asleep. It had been a busy day.

We have to chronicle the events of but one day more, and that was a day when Mr. Arthur, attired in a new hat, a new blue frock-coat and blue handkerchief, in a new fancy waistcoat, new boots, and new shirt-studs (presented by the Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of Rockminster), made his appearance at a solitary breakfast-table, in Clavering Park, where he could scarce eat a single morsel of food. Two letters were laid by his worship's plate; and he chose to open the first, which was in a round clerk-like hand, in preference to the second more familiar superscription.

Note 1 ran as follows:—

"GARBANZOS WINE COMPANY, SHEPHERD'S INN,—*Monday.*

"MY DEAR PENDENNIS,—In congratulating you heartily upon the event which is to make you happy for life, I send my very kindest remembrances to Mrs. Pendennis, whom I hope to know even longer than I have already known her. And when I call her attention to the fact, that one of the most necessary articles to her husband's comfort is *pure sherry*, I know I shall have her for a customer for your worship's sake.

"But I have to speak to you of other than my own concerns. Yesterday afternoon, a certain J. A. arrived at my chambers from Clavering, which he had left under circumstances of which you are doubtless now aware. In spite of our difference, I could not but give him food and shelter (and he partook freely both of the Garbanzos Amontillado and the Toboso ham), and he told me what had happened to him, and many other surprising adventures. The rascal married at sixteen, and has repeatedly since performed that ceremony—in Sydney, in New Zealand, in South America, in Newcastle, he says, first, before he knew our poor friend the milliner. He is a perfect Don Juan.

"And it seemed as if the commendatore had at last overtaken

him, for, as we were at our meal, there came three heavy knocks at my outer door, which made our friend start. I have sustained a siege or two here, and went to my usual place to reconnoitre. Thank my stars I have not a bill out in the world, and besides, *those* gentry do not come in that way. I found that it was your uncle's late valet, Morgan, and a policeman (I think a sham policeman), and they said they had a warrant to take the person of John Armstrong, alias Amory, alias Altamont, a run-away convict, and threatened to break in the oak.

"Now, sir, in my own days of captivity I had discovered a little passage along the gutter into Bows and Costigan's window, and I sent Jack Alias along this covered-way, not without terror of his life, for it had grown very cranky; and then, after a parley, let in Mons. Morgan and friend.

"The rascal had been instructed about that covered-way, for he made for the room instantly, telling the policeman to go down stairs and keep the gate; and he charged up my little staircase as if he had known the premises. As he was going out of the window we heard a voice that you know, from Bows's garret, saying, 'Who are ye, and hwhat the divvle are ye at? You'd betther leave the gutther; bedad there's a man killed himself already.'

"And as Morgan, crossing over and looking into the darkness, was trying to see whether this awful news was true, he took a broom-stick, and with a vigorous dash broke down the pipe of communication—and told me this morning, with great glee, that he was reminded of that 'aisy sthratagem by remembering his dorling Emilie, when she acted the pawrt of Cora in the Plee—and by the bridge in Pezawro, bedad.' I wish that scoundrel Morgan had been on the bridge when the General tried his 'sthratagem.'

"If I hear more of Jack Alias, I will tell you. He has got plenty of money still, and I wanted him to send some to our poor friend the milliner; but the scoundrel laughed and said, he had no more than he wanted, but offered to give anybody a lock of his hair. Farewell—be happy! and believe me always truly yours,

"E. Strong."

"And now for the other letter," said Pen. "Dear old fellow!" and he kissed the seal before he broke it.

"WARRINGTON, *Tuesday.*

"I must not let the day pass over without saying a God bless you, to both of you. May Heaven make you happy, dear Arthur, and dear Laura. I think, Pen, that you have got the best wife in the world; and pray that, as such, you will cherish her and tend her. The chambers will be lonely without you, dear Pen; but if I am tired, I shall have a new home to go to in the house of my brother and sister. I am practising in the nursery here, in order to prepare for the part of Uncle George. Farewell! make your wedding tour, and come back to your affectionate "G. W."

Pendennis and his wife read this letter together after Doctor Portman's breakfast was over, and the guests were gone; and when the carriage was waiting amidst the crowd at the Doctor's outer gate. But the wicket led into the churchyard of St. Mary's, where the bells were pealing with all their might, and it was here, over Helen's green grass, that Arthur showed his wife George's letter. For which of those two—for grief was it or for happiness, that Laura's tears abundantly fell on the paper? And once more, in the presence of the sacred dust, she kissed and blessed her Arthur.

There was only one marriage on that day at Clavering Church: for in spite of Blanche's sacrifices for her dearest mother, honest Harry Foker could not pardon the woman who had deceived her husband, and justly argued that she would deceive him again. He went to the Pyramids and Syria, and there left his malady behind him, and returned with a fine beard, and a supply of tarbooshes and nargillies, with which he regales all his

friends. He lives splendidly, and, through Pen's mediation, gets his wine from the celebrated vintages of the Duke of Garbanzos.

As for poor Cos, his fate has been mentioned in an early part of this story. No very glorious end could be expected to such a career. Morgan is one of the most respectable men in the parish of St. James's, and in the present political movement has pronounced himself like a man and a Briton. And Bows,—on the demise of Mr. Piper, who played the organ at Clavering, little Mrs. Sam Huxter, who has the entire command of Doctor Portman, brought Bows down from London to contest the organ-loft, and her candidate carried the chair. When Sir Francis Clavering quitted this worthless life, the same little indefatigable canvasser took the borough by storm, and it is now represented by Arthur Pendennis, Esq. Blanche Amory, it is well known, married at Paris, and the saloons of Madame la Comtesse de Montmorenci de Valentinois were amongst the most *suivis* of that capital. The duel between the Count and the young and fiery representative of the Mountain, Alcide de Mirobo, arose solely from the latter questioning at the Club the titles borne by the former nobleman. Madame de Montmorenci de Valentinois travelled after the adventure: and Bungay bought her poems, and published them, with the Countess's coronet emblazoned on the Countess's work.

Major Pendennis became very serious in his last days, and was never so happy as when Laura was reading to him with her sweet voice, or listening to his stories. For this sweet lady is the friend of the young and the old: and her life is always passed in making other lives happy.

"And what sort of a husband would this Pendennis be?" many a reader will ask, doubting the happiness of such a marriage and the fortune of Laura. The querists, if they meet her, are referred to that lady herself, who, seeing his faults and wayward moods—seeing and owning that there are men better than he—loves him always with the most constant affection. His children or their mother have never heard a harsh word from him; and when his fits of moodiness and solitude are over, welcome him back with a never-failing regard and confidence. His friend is his friend still,—entirely heart-whole. That malady is never fatal to a sound organ. And George goes through his part of Godpapa perfectly, and lives alone. If Mr. Pen's works have procured him more reputation than has been acquired by his abler friend, whom no one knows, George lives contented without the fame. If the best men do not draw the great prizes in life, we know it has been so settled by the Ordainer of the lottery. We own, and see daily, how the false and worthless live and prosper, while the good are called away, and the dear and young perish untimely,—we perceive in every man's life the maimed happiness, the frequent falling, the bootless endeavour, the struggle of Right and Wrong, in which the strong often succumb and the swift fail: we see flowers of good blooming in foul places, as, in the most lofty and splendid fortunes, flaws of vice and meanness, and stains of evil; and, knowing how mean the best of us is, let us give a hand of charity to Arthur Pendennis, with all his faults and shortcomings, who does not claim to be a hero, but only a man and a brother.

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